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MINICK

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

GEORGE S. KAUFMAN

AND

EDNA FERBER

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MINICK

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The metropolitan premier of MINICK was given on Wednesday evening, September 24th, 1924, at the Booth Theatre, West 45th Street, New York City.

THE PROGRAM WAS AS FOLLOWS:

WINTHROP AMES

PRESENTS

MINICK

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

BY

George S. Kaufman and Edna Ferber

The People of the Play (As they appear)	*The Players*
LIL COREY	*Antoinette Perry*
NETTIE MINICK	*Phyllis Povah*
ANNIE	*Beatrice Moreland*
JIM COREY	*Sydney Booth*
FRED MINICK	*Frederic Burt*
OLD MAN MINICK	*O. P. Heggie*
AL DIAMOND	*Ralph Bunker*
MARGE DIAMOND	*Myra Hampton*
LULA	*Emma Wise*
MR. DIETENHOFER	*Charles R. Burrows*
MR. PRICE	*Thomas Meegan*
MRS. SMALLRIDGE	*Lavinia Shannon*
MISS CRACKENWALD	*Mary Hubbard*
MRS. LIPPINCOTT	*Jessie Graham*
MISS STACK	*Ann Winslow*

THE SCENE

Living-room of Fred and Nettie Minick's Apartment, 5218 South Park Avenue, Chicago.

ACT I: An Evening in Spring.

ACT II: Six Months Later, a November Afternoon.

ACT III: The Following Morning.

CHARACTERS

LIL COREY
NETTIE MINICK
ANNIE
JIM COREY
FRED MINICK
OLD MAN MINICK
AL DIAMOND
MARGE DIAMOND
LULA
MR. DIETENHOFER
MR. PRICE
MRS. SMALLRIDGE
MISS CRACKENWALD
MRS. LIPPINCOTT
MISS STACK

NOTE—This play can be played by six men and seven women. Eliminate "Miss Stack" and distribute her few lines to other women. Annie and Lula can be played by the same actress.

THE SCENE

Living-room of Fred and Nettie Minick's Apartment, 5218 South Park Avenue, Chicago.

ACT I. An Evening in Spring.

ACT II. Six Months Later. A November Afternoon.

ACT. III. The Following Morning.

MINICK

ACT ONE

SCENE: *The living-room of* FRED *and* NETTIE MINICK'S *apartment in Chicago. There is no one on the stage as the Curtain rises. From the dining-room comes the sound of silverware being dumped into a drawer with increasing vengeance. Then the drawer is slammed shut with decision.* ANNIE *is seen to go through passage into kitchen, and the sound of women's voices are heard from the passage left. The clock on the mantel strikes once. It is half past seven in the evening.*

LIL'S *voice, growing clearer as she approaches the passage door, is heard before she enters.*

LIL. (*Enters and calls back*) . . . I'll tell you what we'll do then. I'll read the names off if you want to check them and we can see how many we have on each of the—where did you say it was?

(*By sofa.*)

NETTIE. (*Far off*) What?

LIL. (*Crossing to desk*) Where's the committee list?

NETTIE. (*Far off*) I don't hear you, Lil.

LIL. What?

NETTIE. What did you say?

LIL. Oh, never mind, I'll find it.

[*Goes to desk and searches about on it.* NETTIE *enters from passage, carrying folded card table.*]

NETTIE. What did you say, Lil?

LIL. The committee list. Where did you say it was?

NETTIE. In the third pile under the school list.

[*Starts to set up card table in front of sofa.*]

LIL. Well I don't . . . oh, yes. Here it is. You're wonderful, Net—you ought to see my desk.

NETTIE. If I didn't keep everything in its place in that desk I'd be swamped. It's the one piece of furniture in the flat that I won't let Fred use.

LIL. I wish I could keep Jim away from mine. It's always stuffed full of golf scores, decks of cards and pipe cleaners. (*Carrying papers to card table.*)

NETTIE. (*By now she has set up table and sits on sofa*) Train him. Come on. We can get some of this done.

LIL. (*A glance at the clock; getting desk chair, placing it* R. *of table, sits*) It's half past seven already, Net. His train's in.

NETTIE. Well, it takes twenty-five minutes to get up on the L. (*There is a bang from the kitchen;* NETTIE *shakes her head.*) Again?

LIL. If I were you I'd speak to her.

NETTIE. She knows she's got me.

LIL. She'd never do that in my house. (*She notices the card table for the first time.*) Oh, you did get a new one after all.

NETTIE. What? Oh, card table. Yes, once they begin to go . . . (*She is evidently thinking of something else.*) Let's see, South Side. . . . (*She is ranging papers in piles.*) Here's Mrs. Loper's.

LIL. We'll only have to stop in the middle of this.

NETTIE. They won't be here for another twenty minutes.

LIL. Jim will. He said he'd be up right after dinner.

NETTIE. He was foolish not to come for dinner, Lil.

LIL. Well, he wanted to see this man anyhow, so he thought he might as well take dinner with him.

NETTIE. (*All her attention on her work now*) Now then. There are two hundred and sixty-four school houses in Chicago. We should be able to throw open at least twenty by, say, the middle of May. That gives us two months. Then we will . . .

LIL. Well, now, you want to do what? Divide the work according to districts first?

[*Sounds of slamming and banging from off* L. *The two women look at each other.*]

NETTIE. She *is* in a vile temper. After all, Lil, I suppose it's annoying to be made to get out of your room on such short notice.

LIL. What time did he telegraph?

NETTIE. I got it at five. I don't know why he changed his mind and came today instead of Monday. Of course when I told Annie she'd have to clean out her room and pack her things right away—well!

LIL. You don't think she'll leave, do you?

NETTIE. I did at first. Of course we're paying her two dollars more a week—she's going to sleep at her married sister's. You know—that Emma who sometimes comes in to help serve. (*A sigh.*) Oh, well, I hope it'll work out all right.

LIL. Net, I'm the last person in the world to want to discourage you, but it's going to make an awful difference in your household. An old man is an old man.

NETTIE. I know. But he's really a dear. And after all, he's Fred's father.

LIL. Why couldn't he stay down in Bloomington where he knows everybody? He could get a housekeeper.

NETTIE. Lil—he couldn't.

LIL. Why not?

NETTIE. Now, Lil, I'm telling this to you and nobody else. What Father Minick has left will bring him a few hundred a year, and that's all.

LIL. Really? Why, I thought he had——

NETTIE. Yes, so did we. But Mother Minick was sick for almost three years, and you know what that means, with operations. If Father Minick had only stayed in his own business! But no, he had to put every cent into that automobile thing and—gone. At his time of life!

LIL. My dear! Then——

[*She stops as the clatter of a clothes-horse is heard. There is an instant of silence and* ANNIE *appears in the passage doorway, clothes-horse in hand.*]

NETTIE. What is it, Annie?

ANNIE. I always kept the clothes-horse in my room back of the door. Where do you want it to go now?

NETTIE. Can't you keep it in the basement?

ANNIE. I can't be lugging it up all the time. I iron up here.

NETTIE. Keep it in the kitchen.

ANNIE. I got the ironing board back of the door already. And the carpet sweeper.

LIL. How about the back porch?

NETTIE. (*Eagerly*) Yes!

ANNIE. With the smoke and the dirt from the alley?

LIL. Leave it where it is.

NETTIE. Oh, Lil, I can't have a clothes-horse in Father Minick's bedroom.

The Stage of the Eighth Theatre, New York. Set for Acts I–II, and III of "Minnick"

LIL. Well—there you are.

[*Short pause.*]

NETTIE. Put it—put it in the dining-room, Annie, just for tonight, and I'll find a place for it in the morning.

ANNIE. (*Grimly*) The flat won't be any bigger in the morning.

[*Exits into dining-room; the clothes-horse clatters into place; the two women look at each other, meaningly.* ANNIE *returns to the kitchen.*]

LIL. I give her a week.

NETTIE. Lil, don't say that! She's such a wonderful cook and goes right ahead with her work. I don't do a thing but the marketing. (*Rises and goes to desk, gets card catalogue and returns to sofa.*) Where were we? (*Reads.*) Kenwood School.

LIL. Did she make that what's-its-name we had for supper?

NETTIE. It *was* good, wasn't it? I never can have it when Fred's home. You know the way men are. Meat and potatoes—that's Fred.

LIL. Jim's the same way. Steak seven times a week, if I'd give it to him.

NETTIE. Fred, too. I'll bet that downtown tonight he ordered exactly what he'd have at home.

LIL. I've been married to Jim Corey four years. And every time we go out with the crowd on Saturday night and I order lobster salad because it makes me feel I'm out—*you* know—Jim says, "Wny don't you take something sensible? You know lobster means bicarb."

NETTIE. (*Busy with her cards*) Englewood. Normal School, high school—

LIL. Daisy was saying only yesterday that she and George always——

[*The telephone rings.*]

NETTIE. Lil, answer it, will you? It may be Jim for you.

LIL. (*Rises and goes to phone*) Jim wouldn't be phoning. He'll be here almost any—— (R. *to phone.*) Hello!

DAISY'S VOICE. Drexel 4269?

LIL. Yes.

DAISY'S VOICE. Nettie?

LIL. No, this isn't Mrs. Minick. I'll——

NETTIE. Who is it, Lil?

DAISY'S VOICE. Is she there?

LIL. Yes, she's here. I just answered for——

DAISY'S VOICE. This is Daisy.

NETTIE. Who is it?

LIL. Who?

DAISY'S VOICE. This is Daisy.

LIL. (*Laughs*) Isn't that weird! (*Turns to* NETTIE, *repeats.*) Isn't that weird! It's Daisy. (*Into phone again.*) Isn't that weird! I had your name on my lips this very minute.

DAISY'S VOICE. Sounds like Lil.

LIL. Yeh, Lil. I had dinner here at Nettie's. Jim's downtown.

[*Sits on stool.*]

NETTIE. What's she want?
DAISY'S VOICE. Are you going to meet him downtown? } (*Together*)

LIL. No, he's going to call for me here.

DAISY'S VOICE. If Nettie's busy I——

NETTIE. If it's about the crowd, we can't go.

LIL. No, she——

DAISY'S VOICE. I just wanted to be sure that she and Fred knew about tonight.

LIL. Yes she——

DAISY'S VOICE. She knows about Bloom's, doesn't she?

LIL. Well, she——

NETTIE. Tell her Fred and I can't possibly go out tonight. I wouldn't leave Father Minick.

DAISY'S VOICE. George has found a new place where you can get practically anything you want and he says the food is delicious, too. They make a specialty of sea food and they say they ship it fresh from New York. Besides it's our anniversary and I think it's mean of Nettie——

NETTIE. Tell her Fred's father's coming to live with us and he'll feel strange here and I don't think it would be right to leave him the very first night. He's an old man and I know how Fred would feel about it and——

LIL. Fred's father's coming to live with them, you know, and I suppose they feel it wouldn't be right to leave him the very first night. It's too bad, because it's your anniversary and I know you counted on having the whole crowd together——(*Breaks off in desperation.*) Oh, my goodness, I can't hear a thing! Wait a minute! (*To* NETTIE.) Wait a minute!

(*Together*)

[*The voices stop for a moment, then start again.*]

NETTIE. (*Rising*) Here, let me talk to her. I'll talk to her.

[*Goes to phone.*]

LIL. Wait a minute. She wants to talk to you.

[LIL *leaves the phone as* NETTIE *takes it. At the same time* ANNIE *enters from passage.* LIL

goes up R. *of sofa.* ANNIE *has a gray woolen bed blanket in her arms.*]

NETTIE. (*In telephone*) Hello, Daisy. I'm terribly sorry, but we can't possibly——
ANNIE. What blankets do you want on his bed? (*Together*)

NETTIE. —go out tonight. Fred's father's coming, and you know——
ANNIE. I say, what blankets do you want on his bed? (*Together*)

NETTIE. If it was any other——
ANNIE. I say what——
NETTIE. What, Annie? Wait a minute, Daisy. What *is* it, Annie?
ANNIE. I'm making up his bed. What blankets do you want on it?

[NETTIE *turns to* ANNIE. *As she does so the audience can hear* DAISY'S *voice in a flood of protest.*]

DAISY'S VOICE. If you and Fred don't come tonight, I'll never forgive you. It's George and my anniversary and you know it. Everybody else in the crowd is coming.

NETTIE. (*All the while talking to* ANNIE) Take one of the spare ones packed away on the top shelf in the hall closet. You'd better take two. An old man. Fold up yours and we'll air them tomorrow on the line before we pack them away. (*In phone.*) I was just telling Annie about the blankets.

(*Simultaneous*)

ANNIE. Packed where?

NETTIE. (*Into phone*) Blankets — never mind. Nothing. I was just——

LIL. (*Talks across sofa to* ANNIE) Mrs. Minick says to take one of the spare ones from the top shelf in the hall closet.

ANNIE. I got to get up on a chair.

LIL. And did you hear the rest of it? To fold up yours and they'll be aired tomorrow.

ANNIE. Tomorrow. What else all's going to be done tomorrow and it's Sunday!

[*Exits* D.L.]

DAISY'S VOICE. Now, listen, Nettie, you and Fred simply must come tonight.

NETTIE. Daisy, you know perfectly well I never miss one of the crowd's Saturday nights unless it's simply unavoidable.

DAISY'S VOICE.* When's he coming—the old man?

NETTIE. I'm expecting him any minute now. Fred's bringing him up from the station.

[JIM *rings the doorbell.*]

LIL. I'll go.

[*Goes into hallway.*]

DAISY'S VOICE. Well, when Fred comes I want to talk to him. I think it's an outrage.

NETTIE. But, Daisy, you know I'm dying to go.

JIM. (*In hallway*) Hello, there, kiddy!

NETTIE. I've got to hang up now. Here's Jim! Well, call Fred later, Daisy. I've got to go now. (*She hangs up as* JIM *and* LIL *enter from the hall, his arm around her shoulder.*)
She's awfully unreasonable about this, Lil.

(NOTE: *Daisy's Voice all through this conversation is heard indistinctly by the audience, through means of a Dictograph.*)

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JIM. What's the trouble?

NETTIE. (*A few steps right*) Oh, hello, Jim! It's nothing. Daisy's so unreasonable. She ought to know that with Father Minick coming——

JIM. Hasn't got here yet, eh?

NETTIE. Fred's meeting him. They're due now.

JIM. Say, look here. I was thinking, Lil and I oughtn't to be here. You don't want a lot of people around when he comes.

NETTIE. Nonsense! It'll be nice to have things lively. He and Fred will have had their talk on the way up from the station.

LIL. Now, Net, don't hesitate if you'd rather——

[*Gets desk chair from table and puts it at desk.*]

NETTIE. No. Really. Marge and Al are coming in later anyway. They'll pick you up.

JIM. (*Takes off his coat and hat and tosses them on hall table*) Well, all right.

LIL. (*Goes to card table*) I suppose we might as well put these away, huh?

[NET *and* LIL *make trips from card table to desk, putting away cards and papers.*]

NETTIE. We didn't get much done, did we?

[*In front of sofa.*]

JIM. (*Crossing* L.) My gosh! What's all that?

[*Picks up some papers off card table;* LIL *takes them from him.*]

NETTIE. Don't mix them, whatever you do.

JIM. Club stuff again?

[*Sits on sofa.*]

LIL. (*A trifle belligerently*) Yes, it is.

[*Crossing to desk.*]

JIM. What are you trying to do, anyhow? Fix the world?

LIL. (*Back to table*) Jim, even if you don't understand it, you must admit that three thousand intelligent women banded together——

NETTIE. As a matter of fact, the Woman's Civic Aid numbers *over* three thousand.

JIM. All right. I'm not saying anything against it. Only I don't understand just what you're driving at.

[LIL *crosses to desk.*]

NETTIE. We're trying to do a real welfare work. We're going to bring parents and children—especially foreign-born ones—closer together—at least my committee is.

[LIL *is at table.*]

LIL. We're giving a series of Saturday night get-togethers in the school houses.

[*Returns to desk.*]

NETTIE. Here are all these school houses lying idle every week-end. Now, why can't they be used for community gatherings?

[LIL *and* NETTIE *finish placing the last neat pile of papers on the desk.*]

JIM. All right. But I could run Sears-Roebuck with less paper.

NETTIE. (*Giving him a quick glance*) Why'd you say Sears-Roebuck?

JIM. Huh? Why, I don't know—I——

NETTIE. (*Crossing to him*) Now, Jim. If you and Fred are still thinking about that mail order scheme——

LIL. After all Net and I've said!

JIM. Good heavens, no!

[*Sliding to upper edge of sofa.*]

NETTIE. Because Fred and I have been all over it and he knows the way I feel about it. I don't think either of you ought to give up good positions——

[JIM *rises.*]

LIL. (*Goes right up to him, taking him by surprise*) Jim! You're *not* still thinking about it, are you?

JIM. (*Crosses* D.R. *and looks at clock*) No, I tell you! They're late, aren't they? Fred and——

LIL. (*Touching him on the arm as he passes*) Because if I thought you were——!

JIM. (*Turns desperately*) Lil, for God's sake! (*Goes to desk.*) Suppose I phone down and see if the train's in. Maybe it's late.

[*Sits at desk.*]

NETTIE. I wish you would. They ought to be here.

[*At lower end of sofa.*]

JIM. What's he coming on? What road, I mean?

NETTIE. Chicago and Alton. From Bloomington.

JIM. (*Turning leaves of phone book*) Bloomington, huh?

LIL. I suppose he's had his dinner?

[*Kneeling on sofa, facing* NETTIE *who is back of table.*]

NETTIE. Oh, he'll eat on the train, of course. Alton Limited—there's a diner.

"Minnick"

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JIM. (*With phone book*) Chicago—Chicago—Chicago Alton Railroad. (NETTIE *goes in dining-room, gets glass of water and pours it on roses in bowl on table.*) General and Executive offices—Division Accountant—Pullman Reservations—Lost Articles—Freight Traffic Department—Baggage Room—Inf—Here it is! Information! (*Removes receiver.*) Franklin 6700. . . .

NETTIE. (*In a half whisper to* LIL, *indicates* ANNIE) I'm going to see what she's doing.

[*Tiptoes to passage doorway,* LIL *rises and goes to lower edge of sofa.*]

JIM. (*To* NETTIE) So the old gentleman's coming to live with you, huh? Quite an undertaking. Quite an—Franklin 6700. (NETTIE, *who has been peering and listening at the passage door, from which she can see into the kitchen, turns, and speaks to* LIL *in pantomime, moving her lips, "I don't see her in the kitchen. I guess she's in her room."* LIL *replies, "Oh, I hope he——")* Huh?

LIL. Never mind, Jim.

NETTIE. (*Sotto voce to* LIL) Oh, she's in there half the time, probably sitting down.

[*Sneaks into the passage.*]

JIM. What's going on?

LIL. Oh, never mind!

[NETTIE *is back again.*]

JIM. What's all the fussing about?

LIL. (*Irritated*) Oh, Jim!

JIM. Well—— (*In phone.*) Hello! Hello! (*Turns again to* NETTIE.) How old is he, anyway?

NETTIE. What?

[LIL *crosses to* U.R. *of sofa.*]

JIM. How old is the old gentleman?

NETTIE. Father Minick? He's seventy-one. (*Considers.*) Yes, seventy-one.

LIL. My! H'm!

JIM. Hello! Say, listen. They must answer; it's the Chicago & Alton Railway Station. (*Humming to himself.*) Seventy-one, huh? Well, you know what the Bible says. Three score and ten.

NETTIE. (*Arranging magazines on table*) I hope Father Minick will live to be with us for many, many years.

JIM. Sure. Sure. But we've all got to go some time—Hello!

LIL. Well, Net, I hope it turns out all right. Of course, if it were an old lady it'd be different. Laura Taylor's mother-in-law lives with them and putters around. (JIM *hangs up phone book.*) Hems curtains, takes a hand in the cooking and fusses around her bedroom. But an old man with nothing to do!

JIM. Hello! Information! Hello!

[*The sound of the outer door slamming.* FRED'S *familiar whistle that always announces his homecoming.*]

NETTIE. Here they are!

[*Crosses to front of sofa.*]

JIM. Oh!

[*Hangs up receiver and rises, steps up* C. FRED *enters, carrying* MINICK'S *bag.*]

FRED. Hello! Here he is!

[*Pops back into hall and draws on* MINICK *by the latter's left arm.* OLD MAN MINICK *enters. He is smiling a little uncertainly, blinking a little what with the light and the strange faces that greet him, but he is jaunty enough.*]

NETTIE. (*Crosses* R. *to just in front of him*) Well, Father Minick! (*Kisses him.*) I'm awfully glad to see you! How are you? All right?

MINICK. You bet! (*Pinches her cheek.*) You're looking pretty fine, Nettie!

NETTIE. Here— (*Crosses and gets* R. *of him.*) give me your coat. Fred, you know where the bag goes.

MINICK. Now, don't you wait on me. I can take care of myself fine.

FRED. (*To* JIM *and* LIL) Well, this is nice! Hello! H'are you!

[*Puts down* MINICK'S *bag on phone stool, goes into hall to leave his hat and coat.*]

JIM *and* LIL. Hello!

NETTIE. Father, this is Mr. and Mrs. Corey. Friends of ours.

LIL. How do you do, Mr. Minick?

JIM. H'are you!

NETTIE. Well, father, take off your coat. You're going to stay a while, you know.

MINICK. (*Starts to take off his coat, shunning her aid. Encounters* JIM, *who in turn has stepped forward to assist him. To* NETTIE) All right. (*To* JIM.) Never mind! I can do it! (*He takes off his coat unaided, tosses it and his hat on desk chair. Bringing his hands together with a clap, he rubs them briskly. He's at home.*) Well! Certainly got a nice place here.

FRED. (*Reëntering from hall*) Like it?

NETTIE. Well, father, are you tired from your trip?

MINICK. Me? No—takes more'n a train trip to tire me. Yes *sir!* (*Telephone rings;* FRED *answers it.*) —more'n a train trip to tire me——

FRED. Hello! What? Why, no . . . I don't think—wait a minute. (*To the others.*) Does anybody want the Chicago & Alton?

JIM. No!

NETTIE. Oh, that was long ago.

FRED. (*In phone*) No!

[*Hangs up.*]

LIL. (*Taking a step to* MINICK) I guess your train was a little late, wasn't it?

MINICK. Ma'am?

LIL. Wasn't your train a little late?

MINICK. Nope. Right on time. To the dot. (NETTIE *takes* MINICK'S *coat and hat from the chair and goes into hall with them.* FRED *goes front of table off into the passage with* MINICK'S *stray suit case.*) About ten seconds late pulling into Pontiac, but made it up between there and Dwight. Pulled into Dwight at five forty-seven; pulled into Joliet at six forty-five; pulled into Halsted Street Station at seven-twenty sharp; pulled out of Halsted Street Station at——

NETTIE. (*Returning from hall, she touches* MINICK *lightly on the right shoulder, as she crosses him, and goes below sofa to door* D.L.) Now, Father. You'll want to see your room.

MINICK. (*Looking around room*) All right, Nettie. A-a-a-all right! If it's half as nice as this, it'll certainly be nice. Yessir! You've certainly got it fixed up nice out here. Ver-y tasty! Yessir! I like a little more light, myself, but these lamps are all the go now, seems.

[LIL *sits upper arm of sofa.*]

NETTIE. Come, Father.

MINICK. All right. Yessir! All the go since I was here—— (*To* LIL.) I haven't been to Chicago since before Ma took sick. Used to come pretty regular.

LIL. Is that so? Quite a while, is it?

MINICK. Well, quite a while, yes. One—two—let's see. (*Preparing for a long story, he turns desk chair to face them and sits there.*) Ma took sick second week in August almost three years ago. (JIM *sits table chair.*) August eleventh, it was. Complained of a pain right here. (NETTIE *sits lower arm of sofa.*) "Go to a doctor," I says. "Don't tell me about it! Go see Matthews," I said, "or have him come here!" Had to talk to her like that. Rather suffer than go to a doctor. Scared. Well, finally, I got her to go. Come home talking kind of gay, and said Matthews said it was nothing, but I smelled a rat right away. Yessir. Minute I heard X-Rays I said to Ma—"Ma," I said—"you can't fool me——"

JIM. Terrible thing, sickness.

MINICK. Anything but sickness, I always say. Any other kind of trouble, yes. But you take sickness——

NETTIE. Now, Father Minick, come along. I want you to make yourself at home here.

[MINICK *puts desk chair back and crosses slowly to* R. *of* NETTIE.]

MINICK. All right. Got some things in my trunk for you, Nettie. Ma's things. Tell you what else I got, too. You know that last picture she had taken, before she took sick? Well, I had an enlargement made—— (*Indicates its size.*) That'll go right over

your bookcase there, slick as anything. (*Exits into passage,* NETTIE *following.*) It's got a handsome gold frame on it, about four inches wide, made of gold mostly——

FRED. (*Enters* D.L. *and crosses above table to* U.R.) Isn't Dad a wonder for his age?

LIL. Certainly is. } (*Together*)
JIM. Fine old boy. }

LIL. Do you think there is anything I can do for Nettie?

[*Rises and crosses to desk.*]

FRED. No, she'll be right in. There's nothing to do.

[*The clock strikes eight.*]

LIL. My! It's eight o'clock. Marge and Al ought to be here.

[*Sits in desk chair.*]

JIM. (*To* FRED) I guess you and Nettie won't be able to get away, huh?

FRED. Well, no. I'm afraid not tonight.

JIM. Still, he might turn in early. Even if you came a little late, why——

MINICK. (*Enters from passage, followed by* NETTIE) Yessir! Very nice!

[*Goes to* FRED, C.]

FRED. Well, Dad!

[PUTS *his hand on* MINICK'S *shoulder.*]

NETTIE. (*Sits on sofa and invites* MINICK *to sit beside her*) Now, you sit down, Father, and have a nice visit with us.

LIL. Are you all fixed up, Mr. Minick?

[*Her voice is raised as though speaking to someone deaf.*]

MINICK. (*In raised voice, imitating hers*) Yes, Ma'am—— (*Then whispers.*) I am.

NETTIE. I was just saying to Father Minick I wish we had a big front bedroom for him. I'd gladly give him ours, and we'd move back there, only that room's too small for twin beds and the dresser and Fred's chiffo-robe and all.

MINICK. That room's fine. Good enough for anybody.

NETTIE. You wait till I get the cretonne slips made. And I'll have a little reading lamp for you and an easy chair.

MINICK. That's fine—fine! Just one thing I noticed, though. I wonder if you could spare me another pillow. You see, I sleep high, and if——

NETTIE. Why, of course. Now if there's anything else you want——

MINICK. No, no—everything's fine. (*Goes to armchair* D.R.) I'll be out here most the time, anyway. (*Feels the covering of the chair as he sits.*) H'm! Silk!

JIM. Well, sir, how do you think you're going to like little old Chicago?

MINICK. Chicago? I like Chicago first-rate. Say, I knew Chicago before any of you young sprats were born. Why, you know where the Greenabaum Bank stands, LaSalle and Monroe——

FRED. LaSalle and Madison, Father.

MINICK. That's what I said. (FRED *crosses above sofa, gets cigarette box, offers cigarette to* JIM *who refuses, and comes down lower edge of sofa.*) Why, LaSalle Street wasn't anything, time I was your age. Wooden sidewalks and mud up to here. (*Thrusts out one foot.*) You could have bought that ground for a song.

FRED. I always say if anybody had been a good singer in 1875, he'd own Chicago now.

[*Sits on sofa beside* NETTIE.]

MINICK. (*Bewildered*) Singer?

NETTIE. Don't pay any attention to him, Father Minick. Fred's just trying to be funny.

MINICK. Singer? Oh, singer—you mean—say, that's a good one! Anybody'd been a good singer——

[*Laughs.* JIM *lights cigar which he has taken from his pocket.*]

JIM. (*Rising and crossing down to* MINICK, *taking another cigar from his vest pocket*) Have a cigar, Mr. Minick?

MINICK. (*Takes it*) Thanks.

JIM. (*Going back to former position*) Light?

MINICK. After supper. I never smoke before I eat.

[*Consternation on* NETTIE'S *face. One of those looks between her and* LIL *and between her and* FRED.]

NETTIE. You didn't eat on the train, father?

MINICK. Never eat train food if I can help it. Don't like it, and anyway costs like all-get-out. Bread and butter extra. Piece of parsley on a platter, and where's your dollar?

[*Puts cigar in his pocket.*]

FRED. Why, Father, if I'd known, we'd have stopped downtown. (NETTIE *rises*) Nettie——

NETTIE. (*Goes* U.C.) I'll get you something right away.

LIL. (*Rising*) Let us help.

NETTIE. Will you, Lil? I don't want to ask Annie.

MINICK. (*Rising and going up a few steps*) Now don't you girls fuss. Just anything you got in the house. Don't you bother for me.

[LIL *goes into the dining-room and on into kitchen.*]

"Minnick"

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NETTIE. (*Turning in dining-room door*) I'm afraid there isn't much, Father. We had a kind of pick-up dinner with Fred downtown.

MINICK. It's all right. I'm a light eater myself. Little soup. Cold meat and a couple of eggs.

NETTIE. (*Rather feebly, as she exits*) Ah—yes——

MINICK. (*Strolling down toward hall*) Nettie certainly looks fine. Fine. I don't know that I ever saw her look better. Handsome girl, Nettie. (*Peers into hallway, and then turns—to* JIM.) Your wife ain't bad-looking. No, sir.

[*Drifts up to window.*]

JIM. (*Smirks to* FRED *on* MINICK'S *remark; rises and comes* D.C.) Well, what do you know?

FRED. Oh, nothing in particular. And you?

JIM. About the same.

[MINICK *is peering out the window trying to see in the dark.*]

MINICK. H'm! Trees out there?

FRED. That's the park, Father. Washington Park.

MINICK. Don't say!

JIM. I got some more figures today. Bradley——

[*Comes* R. *of card table, takes a card out of his pocket and hands it to* FRED.]

FRED. Yeh?

JIM. The kind of list we want would cost us close to five thousand.

FRED. Phew! Steep!

MINICK. What floor'r we on?

FRED. The second, Dad.

MINICK. H'm! Well!

JIM. Of course, I don't suppose we can ever really go ahead, with both the girls fighting us on it.

FRED. Nettie blows up every time I mention it.

[MINICK *turns, and edges over to them.*]

JIM. So does Lil. They began it tonight. Jumped on me, both of them.

[*Crossing to upper edge of sofa and sitting.*]

FRED. You mean they brought it up?

JIM. I forget how it came up, but——

MINICK. What are you two boys talking about? Business?

FRED. Oh, nothing in particular, Dad. I tell you, Jim, this is the time to start. Two or three houses have got it all today.

MINICK. What you going to do? New business?

FRED. Five years ago I'd have said no, but things are getting back to where they were before the war.

MINICK. Now, Fred, I don't want you risking a lot of money in any new business. You got a good job, let somebody else do the worrying.

FRED. Please, Father. We're not——

MINICK. That's all right. But you know the way you are. What kind of business is it, anyway? Something new-fangled?

FRED. No, Father. It's the mail order business. Nothing to get excited about.

MINICK. Well, sir, you go careful. That don't strike me like anything for a couple of young fellows. Probably go to work and lose everything you got. And I'll tell you why. (*Gets desk chair, puts it near them and sits.*) What's your mail order business depend on?

FRED. All right, Dad.

MINICK. Depends on your little towns. All right, sir. Take your little towns. Take Bloomington. There's a town set right down in the middle of the richest farming country in Illinois. And what's happened to her! Your farmer today is strapped. What's he getting for his wheat? What's he getting for his corn? And whose fault is it? I tell you till Europe gets on her feet we might just as well all mark time over here, and lucky we're not going backwards. A growing country like this has got to have outlets or where is she? You take any one of those countries over there today—you take Poland, you take Roosha, you take Czecho—uh—take Roumania——

FRED. Oh, Father. We're only talking.

MINICK. Well, I've been through it and I know. If I'd waited a couple of years till things was more settled, I'd be a rich man today with that automobile tire.

FRED. But this is quite another thing, Dad. You don't understand.

MINICK. (*As* NETTIE *enters from passage carrying tray, followed by* LIL *with lunch cloth*) It's a new business, ain't it? And you're talking about going into it?

NETTIE. (*Stops still in her tracks*) Oh, is he? Well, there isn't going to be any new business, and don't you forget it!

[MINICK *rises.*]

FRED. All right!

[*Rises and goes to armchair* D.R. JIM *rises and goes up to a window seat.*]

LIL. (*As she crosses to* R. *of card table and lays cloth*) The minute you two get together——

[FRED *sits in armchair* D.R.]

MINICK. (*Looking at food, hungrily*) That looks good.

NETTIE. (*Placing tray on card table*) I brought it right in here, Father, so you can visit with us while you eat.

MINICK. Well, I didn't want you to go to any bother. (*Picks up dish.*) What's this?

NETTIE. That's a little Waldorf salad, Father. We had it for supper.

MINICK. Waldorf salad, h'm? What's in it?

[*Stirs it a bit with knife, as he stands.*]

NETTIE. Well, you try it and see. There's apples in it, and nuts, and mayonnaise,——

[*Sets down the tray.*]

LIL. (*Just* R. *of* MINICK) It's delicious. I wish I was going to have some.

[OLD MAN MINICK'S *face doubts this.*]

NETTIE. Now, you sit right down, Father, and eat while things are hot.

MINICK. (*After an inclusive glance*) What's hot?

NETTIE. (*Moving things on tray a little*) Well, your tea. And here's some nice warmed-up spinach.

[*Very little enthusiasm from* MINICK. *He points again.*]

MINICK. What's that?

NETTIE. That's a coddled egg.

[*Picks it up and hands it to him.*]

MINICK. Coddled?

NETTIE. It's good for you at this time of night. (*Sits middle of sofa.*) Gives you your calories and vitamines.

[*His look of bewilderment to* NETTIE *and then to* LIL *shows that the words are meaningless.* LIL *turns away and speaks to* JIM *at window.*]

FRED. (*Goes over to tray, looks it over*) Looks pretty good, all right.

[MINICK *looks at* FRED *as if he doubted it.*]

MINICK. (*Tucks his napkin in*) Yes, sir! Fine! Fella couldn't ask for any better. (LIL *goes to chair by table and sits. A pause. Begins to eat. He is a little noisy about it, especially with the more liquid portions of the meal. The coddled egg he brings up in its cup and sups it with a spoon.*) Anybody else want a bite?

NETTIE. We've all eaten, Father.

MINICK. (*Over his shoulder*) How about you, Corey?

JIM. No, thanks.

MINICK. Some nice spinach here going to waste.

NETTIE. Here's some cream for your cold rice pudding.

[*Handing it to him.*]

MINICK. I see it. I see it. (*Returns it to table.*) What do eggs bring in Chicago now?

NETTIE. It depends, Father. The best ones are very high.

MINICK. You give me a couple of days and I'll save you 20%. Where do you do your trading?

NETTIE. (*Visibly patient*) On Fifty-first Street, Father.

MINICK. That's the reason. You watch me. I'll go down to South Water Street.

NETTIE. Don't you bother about that, Father Minick. (MINICK *takes a too-hasty mouthful, spills a spoonful of egg on his coat lapel and vest, is dismayed, wipes it hastily with his napkin, scratches at it with a knife, takes a furtive look around to see if they have noticed. They pretend not to have—all but* NETTIE.) Use a little water.

[MINICK *dips his napkin in water glass, rubs the spots futilely.*]

MINICK. H'm—coddled, eh? Can't get your teeth into it.

LIL. It's good for you.

MINICK. Ya—I suppose so. You young couples see a good deal of each other, do you?

NETTIE. Yes, we're very good friends, Father.

[LIL *pats her hand.*]

MINICK. I see. I see. (*He eats. A pause.*) Come in to spend the evening, eh? (*Eats.*) Well, looks as if we could get up a pretty nice pinochle game some time—the three of us. What say?

FRED. We don't play that much in Chicago, Dad.

JIM. (*To* MINICK) It's a game I never learned, sir.

MINICK. Huh! What *do* you play?

LIL. We play bridge.

MINICK. Bridge, eh? Well, I guess I can pick it up.

NETTIE. (*With apprehension*) It's a pretty difficult game, Father.

MINICK. M-m-m-m-, a fellow that can play pinochle can play pretty much anything. (*To* LIL.) You got any family?

LIL. (*Rather helplessly*) Family?

NETTIE. Father Minick means children, Lil.

LIL. No. No children.

MINICK. Married long?

LIL. Four years.

MINICK. Four years, h'm? Fred and Nettie been married three. My day, when folks got married, they had babies.

NETTIE. Nowadays, Father Minick, people think about whether it's fair to the child.

MINICK. Well, I guess Ma and I forgot that. (*He now surveys the empty tray.*) Well!

NETTIE. Have you had enough, Father?

[*He takes a sip of tea and grimaces.*]

MINICK. Plenty, plenty. Besides, just as well to eat light this time of night. (*Fishes in his vest pocket for his cigar.*) Read just the other day where a fella died from eating too much.

[*Puts cigar in his mouth;* FRED *crosses to* MINICK, *taking a box of matches from his pocket.*]

FRED. (*Strikes a match*) Here you are, Father.

[*Gives him the lighted match.* FRED *returns to his seat.*]

MINICK. (*Puffs with a loud putt-putting. Holds the cigar off contemplatively*) Yessir! (*Throws burnt match in tea cup.*) Died! (*A pause here, with the others sitting about almost helplessly silent. There seems nothing to say.* NETTIE *puts tea cup on tray.*) Well, what time do you folks go to bed?

FRED. This is a little early for us, Dad.

NETTIE. (*Re-arranging the dishes on the tray*) If you're tired there's no reason why you shouldn't get your good night's sleep. Now, why don't you?

MINICK. Who? Me? I'm as wide-awake as a whistle.

NETTIE. I just thought you might be. We have some friends coming in a little later.

MINICK. This time of night?

FRED. They're not going to stay.

MINICK. Then what they coming for?

LIL. They're stopping for us. We're going as soon as they come.

MINICK. Oh!

[*Looks expectantly at his watch.* NETTIE *folds up napkin.*]

NETTIE. (*Rising. Picks up tray from table*) Lil, will you just fold the cloth up?

[LIL *comes down to front of card table, starts to fold cloth.*]

FRED. Why are you doing that? Where's Annie?

NETTIE. (*Between card table and sofa, holding tray*) Fred, she's had enough to do today without——

FRED. Nonsense! (*Rises and crosses to passage door—calls;* LIL *drops cloth on table and goes* U.L.) If I ran my office the way——(*Calls.*) Annie!

NETTIE. Now, Fred, I wish you wouldn't interfere when I'm——

[*She stops as* ANNIE, *a rather sinister figure by now, looms up in the passage door.* NETTIE *turns* D.R., *leaving* FRED *in charge of the field.* NETTIE *turns up to window.*]

FRED. (*Standing* D.L. *of table*) Would you mind clearing away that tray, Annie.

[*Turns up around table to* L. *of it and stands watching.* ANNIE *goes to tray in silence, going be-*

tween card table and sofa, and grimly. This brings her face to face with MINICK, *who looks up at her from his chair and smiles friendly. The others are far from smiling.* ANNIE *rearranges the dishes preparatory to carrying the tray. This she does with unnecessary energy.*]

NETTIE. (*With an assumption of graciousness she is far from feeling*) Annie, this is Mr. Minick's father, who is going to live with us. Father Minick, this is our Annie.

MINICK. H'are you, m'girl?

ANNIE. (*Surlily.* FRED *moves to back of table*) H'are you?

NETTIE. We couldn't get along without Annie, could we, Annie? She makes us all comfortable, don't you, Annie? (ANNIE *clatters a dish.*) Oh, tomorrow, Annie—there's no reason why you should come in early. You know, Mr. Minick and I always sleep late Sunday. (*Remembers* MINICK.) Oh, Father, Fred and I are very lazy Sunday morning.

MINICK. Not me. I'm up and around six o'clock.

[ANNIE *gives him a hard look.*]

NETTIE. Oh, but Annie won't be here until——

MINICK. That's all right. I'll just stir around in the kitchen as quiet as a mouse. (ANNIE *again looks at him menacingly.*) Fix some coffee and toast and boil me an egg. (*She puts up tray and starts* L.) That's all I take, as a general thing. (*Rises and starts* L. *after her.*) Maybe some cereal.

[*She grimaces again, turns and starts through door* L. AL DIAMOND *rings the doorbell.*]

LIL. That's Marge and Al.

NETTIE. It's all right, Annie. I'll go.

FRED. (*He jerks the desk chair back to its place by the desk and begins to fold up the card table*) You'd think that girl was the last girl on earth.

NETTIE. (*As she crosses to hall*) Well, a nice white girl doesn't like sleeping out.

LIL. And Nettie never used colored help. Once you begin you never can——

[FRED *puts card table back of chair at window. From the hall comes* AL'S *voice—the voice of a professional back-slapper.* MARGE'S *too.*]

AL. (*Off*) Everybody ready! The parade is starting!

MARGE. (*Off*) Hello there, Net!

[*Enters.*]

LIL. (*A glance at the clock*) Only twenty minutes late.

AL. (*Enters.* AL'S *entrances always amount to an explosion. He bursts into the room*) Well, citizens!

MARGE. Hello, boys and girls.

AL. And citizenesses! Would appreciate a little round of welcome, and the keys to the old buffet!

[MARGE *goes into hall and arranges her hair before mirror.* MINICK *is standing apart, a trifle uncertainly, smiling a little, below sofa. Things look lively and he anticipates some fun.*]

FRED. (*Leaning the folded card table against the* L. *end of the desk*) Hello, Al.

LIL. (*Advancing to* C.) Well, I must say——

[JIM *waves a welcome.*]

AL. (*Crosses to* LIL) Oh, you kid! Remember —"Papa loves mamma, mamma loves papa."

[*He gives a playful jerk to a ribbon on* LIL'S *waist.* MINICK *observes all this; gives a cackle of appreciation.* AL *has a trick of clapping his hands together and rubbing them briskly. It expresses, for him, geniality. This he now does.* MARGE *enters, followed by* NETTIE. MARGE *is shrill, gay, "the life of the party."*]

MARGE. (*Reënters from hall*) Listen, we're not terribly late, are we?

LIL. (*Crossing to* MARGE) Not any later than usual.

MARGE. Well, listen, we got started on time, honest to God, but Al had a——

AL. (*Back to audience*) Lots of time. Shank of the evening, that's what it is! (*Starts to chuck* NETTIE *under the chin, but* MARGE *stops him. He turns to* FRED.) Shank of the evening! and a BIG night ahead! Wait till those little corks get to popping!

FRED. (*To* MARGE *and* AL) I don't think you've ever met my father. Father, this is Mr. and Mrs. Diamond.

[MARGE'S *greeting is too slight for utterance, so that one hears only "—— do," as her glance slides past him.* AL *goes to* MINICK.]

MARGE. Lil, my God, what do you think! You know that crepe romaine I got at Vogue—Nettie, listen to this— (NETTIE *turns to her.*) —I paid a hundred and seventy-five for it and what do I see this afternoon in Leschin's but the same dress down to the embroidery on the slip. I went right in and asked the price. I pret' nearly died when the girl told me. Ninety-eight fifty. Well, believe me, I marched right down to Vogue and gave them a piece of my mind they won't forget in a hurry. "Listen," I said—"What do you folks mean——"

AL. (*Speaks simultaneously with* MARGE, *to* MINICK, *having just been introduced; following dialogue is simultaneous with* MARGE'S *speech down to where* AL *calls* "LIL") Well, I certainly am glad to meet Fred's father. Anybody that's got Fred Minick for a son must be all right! I'll tell the world!

MINICK. (*Genial, if bewildered*) That's right! That's right!

AL. Yop! Fred's a grand fella—when he's sober. (*A dig in* FRED'S *ribs. Men's conversation quiets a bit.*) Well!

[*The noisy clap of the hands. Starts back of table.*]

MINICK. Dinehart, d'you say the name was?

FRED. Diamond, Father.

AL. (*Stamping away, thumbs in his vest. He prances, crossing* MINICK, *around table to upper end of it, where* JIM *meets him.* FRED *turns up and joins, making a group of three men, above table and sofa*) Diamond is right! And eighteen karats! Well, James, m'boy! How's the old universe been mistreating you?

[FRED *crosses up right to* JIM.]

MINICK. (*Crosses below table and attempts to join group* U.R. *More to himself than not, the others having turned away, leaving him again alone*) Oh, Diamond. I thought you said Dinehart. Because I used to know a fella named Dinehart in the paint business in Springfield. Paints and oils.

MARGE. (*Continuing*)—by having the nerve to charge me one hundred and seventy-five dollars for a dress that I saw the exact same——

JIM. (*In answer to* AL'S *last speech to him*) Oh, can't complain.

AL. Oh, say, who do you think I wrote for twenty-five thousand iron boys this afternoon? Remember Sid Herman?

MINICK. (*In effort to get into conversation*) Friend of yours?

AL. (*Goes on paying no attention to* MINICK. *Crosses and joins the women at* R.C., *followed by* FRED *and* JIM. *They make a compact group at* R.C. *Calls*) Lil!

LIL. What?

AL. Sid Herman—you knew him, too, Net. Ask Marge if she remembers him.

MINICK. (*Following along to above sofa. Obligingly*) Do you?

MARGE. Oh, shut up, Al.

AL. I'll say she remembers him. Came within an inch of hooking up with him, that's merely all.

[*A clap of his hands and the brisk rubbing of palms. A shout of laughter goes up from crowd, who have gathered in a little group.*]

JIM *and* LIL. Oh-h-h, you Marge!

[MINICK *is vague as to what all the noise and banter means, but is determined to be gay, too. In imitation of* AL *he claps his hands loudly together and rubs his palms briskly. He beams upon the group with his grin which by now has grown somewhat set. He expects some geniality in return, but no one is paying any attention to him. In the following scene the six young people form a close little group in which four, and frequently all six, are talking at the same time.* MINICK *is definitely outside the group.*]

AL. Well, how about it? Let's shake a leg! (*Shaking his leg in illustration.*) Hop on the old band-wagon, or forever after hold your peace!

JIM. What time is it?

AL. Starting time if we're going to where we're going to get to!

MARGE. Did Daisy and George phone?

NETTIE. Yes, Daisy called up a little while ago, but she wasn't sure where they were going.

LIL. Well, if Daisy doesn't know, who does? It's their party.

AL. Say, that's a fine note. Why, I saw George this afternoon and he said Keystone Club. The li'l old Keystone Club.

JIM. Oh, what d'you want to drive way out there for? River Forest. Takes upwards of an hour and a half. Time you get out there it'll be time to turn around and come back.

MARGE. I heard of a wonderful new place the other day. Listen, I heard of a wonderful new place the other day. Bess Snyder told me about it. It's called the—oh, I don't know—it's out on—anyway, she says you can get practically anything you want and a wonderful cabaret——

[MINICK *up to this time has maintained his company grin. But now he decides to give up. Decides to shift for himself. Turns. Notices that one bulb of the table lamp is not lighted.*]

LIL. I used to like Ike Bloom's place. I don't see why we have to drive way out of town.

AL. All right. We aim to please. That's our li'l motto! Who's for the House That Jack Built?

JIM. Oh, say, that's miles out on the Milwaukee Avenue Road. Eleven before we get there.

MARGE. Well, suppose it is?

LIL. I thought we were going to some place in town.

JIM. Got to do a lot a detouring on the Milwaukee Avenue Road. Torn up.

AL. Well, let's get together. All together for the big show. In this tent, ladies and gentlemen——

MARGE. Pete's sake, yes!

LIL. Well, I'll get my things.

[AL *helps her cross* L. *Exits into the passage. The clock strikes half-past eight.*]

AL. (*Loud clap of the hands*) All right, lads and lassies. Keystone Club it is. Peerade moves north on Cherry Street. Forward! March!

[*Starts towards door, prancing and singing.* AL *goes through group into outer hall, followed by* MARGE *and* JIM. JIM *puts his coat on. They go out of sight.* JIM *goes to the opening and as they say "good-bye," turns back into the room towards* MINICK. FRED *by desk chair.* NETTIE *by lower corner of desk.* MINICK *is by now up at front left end of table on which stands a lamp. He is idly pulling the lamp chain, his head half turned towards the noisy group. He notices that something is wrong with one chain. It does not pull. Is stuck, apparently. He stoops slightly to peer at it.*]

NETTIE. Well, good-bye.

FRED. Good-bye, have a good time.

AL. (*Reappearing in the doorway and advancing a step into the room.* MARGE *stands in the doorway;* JIM *is seen over her shoulder*) Whaddeyou mean, good-bye!

NETTIE. Fred and I aren't going, you know.

MARGE. Not going?

AL. Not going! You're crazy! Loony like a loon, that's what you are! *Why* aren't you going?

FRED. (*Low voice*) We can't go tonight, Al.

AL. Why not, for Pete's sake! (NETTIE *gives*

a significant glance at the old man. Very loud.) Well, for—! I'll soon fix that. Al W. Fixit—that's who I am.

NETTIE. No, no, Al.

FRED. (*In protest*) Al!

AL. (*Calling over their heads to* MINICK) Heh, Papa! You don't care if they go out, do you?

MINICK. Huh?

AL. (*Going directly over to* MINICK) You don't care if Fred and Nettie breeze out awhile?

MINICK. Breeze?

FRED. (*Taking a step near* AL) Never mind, Dad.

AL. Yeh. With us. The crowd. You can take care of yourself, can't you, kid?

MINICK. Me? Why, sure I can. I'm no baby. I'm all right.

AL. (*Comes back to doorway*) There! What did Uncle Allie tell you?

MINICK. (*Peering around at* FRED *and* NETTIE) You going somewhere? Pretty late, ain't it?

FRED. Nettie and I aren't going, Dad. It's only the others.

NETTIE. We're going to stay home with you.

MINICK. Nobody has to stay home with me. (*Nervously jerking the lamp chain.*) I can take care of myself. Take care of myself fine. You go right along with your friends here and enjoy yourself. Yessir. Take care of myself fine. Nobody's got to stay with me. Nobody's got to—— (*He is a little startled by the whole proceedings, and somewhat embarrassed by his own feelings. To conceal this he concentrates on the faulty lamp as though that were his chief concern.*) This light don't work.

[MINICK *quite suddenly turns and goes off into the passage just as* LIL *enters. She steps aside for him, sensing the situation.*]

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LIL. (*She stands in passage door looking after* MINICK) What's the matter?

FRED. Where's he—— Shouldn't I see if——

[*Goes below sofa, looking after* MINICK.]

NETTIE. It's all right, dear.

[*Pantomime.*]

AL. (*A step towards* FRED) 'Course he's all right. (*More confidence.*) No nurse needed for that old boy.

FRED. Well——

[*Turns back.*]

AL. Come on, people! Into your duds! This way for the big show!

[*He makes a megaphone of his hands. Circling around* NETTIE *to door, singing "Papa loves mamma."*]

NETTIE. Al, we just can't go yet. Why don't you go ahead and we'll follow, if we possibly can?

FRED. Yes, let's leave it at that.

MARGE. Oh, don't be silly. I never heard anything so old-fashioned in my life.

LIL. (*Coming down beside* FRED, *below him. Crossing* R.) I think that'll be best. We know you'll come if you can.

FRED. (*Crossing to* AL) You four go ahead. We'll catch up to you.

[LIL *crosses and exits.*]

AL. Now, you're not going to backslide! Come one, come all—we want 'em all!

FRED. We have to wait till he goes to bed.

AL. All right! (*A clap of his hands.*) We're off! (JIM *goes first,* MARGE *next, then* AL *and* FRED *together, then* NETTIE *and* LIL *together. As the whole group moves toward hall.*) Now, get this earful! The bunch'll be at the li'l old Congress.

LIL. Well, how are you going to get down?

NETTIE. We'll take the L. It's quicker, anyhow.

MARGE. We'll wait until half past nine. Half past nine.

AL. And if there's any new dope we'll give you a buzz. (*The group is out in hall, still talking. You hear* AL *saying:*) Now I'll ring you.

(*Together*)

MARGE. Now, don't be foolish!

LIL. Come on, come on. We'll get out and leave them alone.

JIM. Now look here, Daisy and George were going to call up. If they do——

FRED. We'll get their call if you miss them.

NETTIE. Well, maybe you'd better ring us up.

JIM. What was the name of the place, Marge?

MARGE. Keystone.

NETTIE. Ike Bloom's.

JIM. House That Jack Built.

FRED. Milwaukee Avenue Road.

LIL. Chicken supper.

AL. George got the drinks——

[*The stage is bare for an instant after they go, with the chatter continuing in the hall.* MINICK *enters, as group goes into hallway, with a hammer and screw-driver. His entrance is a little diffident. Goes above table. Flings hammer and screw-driver on the polished table. Stoops a little, stiffly, removes the lamp shade and puts*

it on table. It rolls on sofa. Peers even more closely then before; unscrews a bulb; jerks the chain again. Picks up screw-driver, gives it a couple of light taps with the hammer. The farewells in the hall have died down, then ceased. FRED *slams the outer door at first tap of* MINICK'S *hammer.* NETTIE *reënters followed by* FRED.]

NETTIE. (*Comes a little way into the room, sees* MINICK, *stops a second*) Father Minick! What are you doing?

[*Crosses to* L. *side of table to see what* MINICK *is doing.*]

MINICK. I'm fixing your lamp.

NETTIE. But you mustn't—Fred!

[*Appeals to her husband.*]

FRED. (*Comes to* R. *of* MINICK) Don't bother, Dad. We'll have it fixed.

NETTIE. Father, where did you get—— Fred, put the shade back on, will you, please?

MINICK. (*Reaching for shade*) I'll do it.

NETTIE. No, Father. You sit down. Whatever made you—I've sent for the man to fix it.

[NETTIE *takes screw-driver.*]

MINICK. Man nothing! Glad to do it for you. Been fixing things all my life. (*Crosses* R. *to* D.R.) Say, I can do more with a hammer and a couple of nails than most these fellas can with a whole tool chest.

NETTIE. Father, we have a man who does everything like that for us. A regular man. Now, I want you to promise me that you're not going to——

MINICK. No trouble. I like to putter around. A nail here, a nail there.

[FRED *is now putting shade and bulb on lamp.*]

NETTIE. Oh—— (*Crosses to* MINICK *and gets hammer. Turns desperately to her husband.*) FRED!

[*Exits with hammer and screw-driver into passage.*]

MINICK. What's the matter with her?

FRED. (*At sofa, replacing shade*) Nettie likes everything just so around the house.

MINICK. Wasn't hurting anything. (*A little pause.* MINICK *goes up to window and stands looking out—sulking a little. Yawns.*) Whyn't you and Nettie go along with the rest of 'em?

FRED. Well—we'll see.

[NETTIE *reënters—to lower end above table.*]

MINICK. No sense in your staying around here. I'm going to bed anyhow. Going right away.

NETTIE. (*Alertly*) Oh, are you?

FRED. (*Takes* MINICK'S *arm and attempts to maneuver him into chair*) No, he's not. Now, we're going to sit down here, the three of us, and have a good talk.

MINICK. (*Still at window, facing away from them*) I'm not going to let you stay home with me. You got your evening planned out. Take care of m'self. I can take care of m'self fine.

FRED. (*Crosses and sits in armchair* D.R.) Well, we may go after awhile. Sit down. Tell us. How's everybody in Bloomington? Sit down, Nettie. (NETTIE *stands lower end of sofa.*) Father, sit down.

[MINICK *isn't deceived. He gives a quick look, pulls out his watch.*]

MINICK. I'm going to bed in two minutes.

NETTIE. (*Grasps at this*) I'll hurry Annie up. (*Goes to passage door.*) Annie! (*Aside.*) The water's running—Annie! Are you almost finished?

ANNIE. (*Off*) N'yeh!

[*Or nearly that. It is really a combination of yes and a snarl.*]

NETTIE. (*To* MINICK) She's nearly finished. Then you can go back.

[*Sits again, lower end of sofa.*]

FRED. Now, he's not going to bed yet—are you, Dad?

MINICK. Yes, I am. I want you to keep on just the same as if I wasn't here.

FRED. (*With obvious effort at conversation*) Tell me, whatever become of that Brettschneider boy I used to run around with? Remember—I told you about him, Nettie. Whatever became of him, Dad?

MINICK. (*Strolling to* NETTIE'S *desk and peers into picture over it*) I was going to bed anyhow, You folks run along.

FRED. Oh, now, Dad.

NETTIE. Well, now, maybe Father Minick does want to go to bed, Fred?

FRED. (*Relieved*) Well, if you're sure, Dad, that it's all right——

MINICK. 'Course it's all right. You go right out and enjoy yourself.

NETTIE. (*Rising*) I'll get my things on.

[*Goes quickly to the passage door and exits.* MINICK *turns to desk and jerks lamp chain nervously.*]

FRED. (*Going above* MINICK, *and places his hands on* MINICK'S *shoulders*) Dad, you know how awfully glad we are to have you here, don't you?

[*There comes a look in the old man's face unseen by* FRED, *a look of something resembling terror. A piteous look. It says, "So this is what my old age has brought me!"*]

MINICK. It's awfully nice of you and Nettie to do it. I guess I'm making a good deal of bother, coming in on you like this.

FRED. Why, Dad! Not a bit.

MINICK. I know. But you and Nettie got your own way of doing things. And—I know.

[NETTIE, *her coat and hat on, comes into the dining-room and puts out the light there.*]

FRED. (*With a hearty slap on the back*) You don't know anything of the kind. It's going to be fine. You're going to like it and so are we.

[NETTIE *enters the room.*]

NETTIE. (*Puts out light in standard lamp by easy chair*) What?

FRED. I was just telling Dad how happy we are to have him.

NETTIE. (*Goes to front of* MINICK, *sits on desk chair and pats his hand.* FRED *is* L. *of* MINICK) Of course. We're awfully happy, Father Minick. And we want you to feel that this is your home, and that what we want to do is to make you happy and comfortable.

MINICK. I'll be all right. I'll be all right. Don't you worry about me. (*Crossing* L.) You children go on, now.

[*He sits on sofa, takes* "Vanity Fair" *off table and pretends to read.*]

NETTIE. Now is there anything you want, Father?

MINICK. I got everything I want. I'm fixed up.

[FRED *crosses to hall, gets his coat and hat.*]

NETTIE. (*Turns out desk lamp*) Annie's putting on her things now. She'll be out of your way in one minute. All right, Fred?

FRED. (*Comes back a few steps into the room*) Yes, I guess so. Now, you are all right, Dad? You know, I'd just as soon not go. . . .

MINICK. (*With a wave of his hand*) Shoo! O' course you go!

FRED. Well——

NETTIE. Well, good-night then, Father.

MINICK. Good-night—have a good time.

NETTIE. (*Crosses to him and kisses him*) See you in the morning. And you'll turn out the other lights in here, won't you? And just leave the hall light on. Don't forget.

[FRED *crosses to doorway.*]

FRED. (*Turns and almost bumps* NETTIE *at doorway*) Good-bye, Father. How about a nice walk tomorrow morning, you and I?

MINICK. Sure—we'll have big times.

NETTIE. Good-night.

[*Exits.*]

FRED. (*Lingeringly*) Good-night.

[*Exits.*]

MINICK. Good-night. (*The outer door slams; the old man rises and throws down his magazine;*

he walks aimlessly toward the hall; then he turns toward the window, cups his eyes and peers into the darkness outside in the hope of seeing them depart. He comes C., *mutters to himself, "Well, sir!" starts toward table lamp and turns it out, then down to desk lamp which he lights; sees card catalogue, sits in armchair and takes out a few cards, replacing them obviously in the wrong places; then takes off his boots; his feet are tired and he commences to stretch them, reminds him of* AL, *and he laughs, rises and tries to imitate* AL'S *dance, singing "Popper loves mommer, mommer loves popper." This being too much for him, he comes* C. *and hears a noise in the kitchen; crosses* L. *and sees* ANNIE *in passage.*) Oh, hello!

ANNIE. (*Enters, carrying some bundles, a suit case, alarm clock, umbrella and wisp of palm; she is dressed for the street, and starts to cross* R., *never stopping for him*) I'm goin' now.

MINICK. (*He gets behind and trots along right after her*) Forgot all about you bein' here. Been packing up your things, I suppose?

ANNIE. Yes. I'm goin' now.

MINICK. (*Sociably*) Live far from here?

ANNIE. Yeh.

[*She keeps right on to the outer door.*]

MINICK. (*Following to hallway door*) Take the L, do you? L's quicker than the surface car. Yessir! (*The outer door slams.* ANNIE *is gone.*) Much—quicker. I came up on the L—— (*Musing to himself.*) Yessir! I came up on the L.

[*Gets his boots, turns out lamp* D.R., *ambles across, exits up passage, closing his door; the clock strikes nine.*]

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

SCENE: *Same as Act I, about six months later. A November afternoon. The time is about two-thirty.* LULA, *a colored maid, is between sofa and table wiping table legs, humming a spiritual tune. She is leaning over so that her face cannot be seen. Several pieces of furniture are out of place in the room. There is a dust pail at* L. *edge of table; a broom and carpet sweeper lean against armchair* D.R.; *the sofa pillows are in the chair* U.R. *of desk; one window shade is out of alignment; telephone stool is upside down on desk chair.*

MINICK *enters from passage. He is dressed in the attire of a semi-invalid who is not going out again that day. He wears loose bedroom slippers. Around his neck is an article that might be a muffler and might be a large colored silk handkerchief. He has a heavy cold and has to sniffle now and then. On these occasions he pulls a large handkerchief from his pocket. He crosses to* L.C.

MINICK. Thought I heard Nettie. Was it Nettie?
LULA. (*Straightens up*) No, sir.

[*Tugging at upper end of sofa to replace it.*]

MINICK. (*Dissappointed*) Oh! (*Makes as though to help her, pushing up lower end of sofa to table.*) Here! (*She pushes sofa, catching him between it*

and table; in getting out he stumbles over dust pail; he comes below table to U.R. LULA *crosses to desk and arranges articles on it.*) She'll be coming back soon, won't she?

LULA. I s'pose so.

MINICK. What time'd she go?

LULA. (*Wipes and replaces telephone stool*) I told you she went just before you come in.

MINICK. Then she ought to come back soon—(*Sniffles.*)—if she's going to get here. (LULA *does not reply to this.*) Yessir! Ought to come back soon. It's half past— (*Sneezes.*) two.

LULA. (*Now gathers up pail after she has crossed* L. *and goes into passage as she speaks*) I told you you shouldn't have gone downtown this weather. Look at you cold.

[*Leaves the pail, dust pan and whisk broom in passage.*]

MINICK. (*Sits chair just above desk*) Stay home for a little cold! Sick of staying home.

LULA. (*Reënters briskly and goes above table to where he is sitting*) Going to keep you in the house another four days—that's what it is. (*She pulls cushions from under* MINICK, *who rises, and replaces them on sofa.*) Mrs. Minick she was awful mad when she discovered you gone out. Blamed me for it.

MINICK. Guess I'm old enough to know if I can go out or not.

LULA. (*Still arranging pillows and sofa*) Don't know no more'n a child. Have to keep after you like you was a baby all the months I been here. What you go out for anyway, feeling like you do?

MINICK. (*Very high-toned; a few steps toward her*) I'll tell you something, m'girl. There may

be some pretty important developments out of my going downtown this morning.

LULA. (*Unimpressed*) Yah! 'Velopments!

[*Crosses* R., *sees pin on floor by armchair, picks it up.*]

MINICK. (*Following*) Some pret-ty important de-velopments. Yessir! Yessir! May take a good deal of business acumen to handle it. There's several angles and I'm not sure which angle to take. (LULA *is crossing* R. *with broom and sweeper, placing them against lower edge of table, going above table and pushing easy chair in proper place.*) That's why I want to see Nettie.

LULA. (*Crossing* D.R. *to smoking table*) You better let her alone today.

MINICK. That's all right. She'll listen to this. We've got to put our heads together. Yessir!

[LULA *has moved smoking table from its accustomed place to in front of armchair, removes articles on it to bookcase and takes from the latter an elaborate gavel with silver inset.*]

LULA. I tell you you better not go bothering her today with her meetin' on.

MINICK. Yeh—meeting! What's a meeting! If she's got a meeting what's she doing out so long for?

[*Is just* L. *of desk.*]

LULA. She had to go for sandwich stuff. I told you once. She didn't know she was going to have this meeting— (*Blows on silver inset of gavel and polishes it, placing it on smoking table.*) —till an hour ago. It was going to be over at some other lady's house. (*Starts up for window to straighten shade.*) Wisht it'd stayed there.

MINICK. (*Wandering* D.L. *to smoking table*) Well, don't seem to me much sense in holding a lot of women's meetings when— (*Sees gavel on table; picks it up.*) —when there's things a million times— (*Reads inscription on silver inset;* LULA *goes* R. *above table.*) —more— (LULA *is picking up her broom and carpet sweeper as* DIETENHOFER *rings the doorbell.*) I'll let 'em in.

[*Puts down gavel with decision, and starts to door.*]

LULA. (*Stopping dead in her tracks*) You mean them friends of yours coming this house again today!

MINICK. (*Turning in hall door*) Like to know why not!

LULA. After me just cleanin' up and Mrs. Minick expectin' her meetin'? They been coming here three days hand-running.

MINICK. Entitled to have company, ain't I? Too cold to sit in the park.

[*The doorbell rings again.* MINICK *starts into hallway.*]

LULA. Yah, company. What you do—sit around, talk your fool heads off.

[*Starts to go and then decides to wait and see who it is.*]

MINICK. (*Off*) Gentlemen, come in!

DIETENHOFER. (*Off*) Well, Minick, how are you?

PRICE. (*Off*) Afternoon.

DIETENHOFER. (*Off*) The cold any better?

MINICK. (*Off*) I think it's breaking up. I was downtown this morning.

PRICE. (*Off*) Bad weather to be out in.

[DIETENHOFER, *a man of about* MINICK'S *age, comes into the room to* R.C. *He wears rubbers and overcoat, and has a hat on. He is unwinding a long muffler. The voices of* MINICK *and* PRICE *continue in the hallway.*]

DIETENHOFER. (*To the glaring* LULA) Hello.

LULA. (*Pointing to his rubbers*) I just clean this room and Mrs. Minick going to have a meeting.

DIETENHOFER. (*Looking down questioningly*) Huh?

LULA. I say, I wish you leave them rubbers in the hallway, day like this. Took me hour cleaning up after you yesterday.

DIETENHOFER. Oh!

[*He turns to go, crossing* PRICE *who comes* R.C., *followed by* MINICK.]

LULA. (*Pointing to* PRICE'S *feet*) You got 'em on too.

[PRICE *is another old gentleman, wears overshoes, etc. He is struggling with his overcoat.* DIETENHOFER *goes into hall and removes his rubbers.*]

MINICK. Yes, sir, I guess we won't sit out in the park much more this year. (*Notices that* LULA *is pointing at* PRICE'S *feet.*) Now what's the matter?

LULA. I ask that other gentleman please leave his rubbers in the hallway.

MINICK. (*To* PRICE) She's just cleaned up—sort of fussy.

[PRICE *nods, walks on his heels* U.L. *corner and removes coat and hat.* DIETENHOFER *reënters, rubbers off, and seeing* PRICE *removing his coat,*

starts to take his own off; he looks for a place to put his coat and selects the window seat, but he keeps his hat on.]

LULA. All I got say is you wait till Mrs. Minick comes back——

MINICK. That's all right.

LULA. She going to be awful mad, find you here today.

[*Exits into passage.*]

PRICE. (*Coming down to* MINICK) What did she say?

MINICK. Nettie's got some clubwomen coming or something, but we got lots of time.

PRICE. Sure—I got time.

[*Crossing* D.R. *to armchair, sits.*]

DIETENHOFER. (*Taking out his pipe and crossing* D.L.) Women are always doing something nowadays. My time they stayed home and tended to things.

[*Sits on sofa.*]

PRICE. Not today. It's the Unrest.

MINICK. (*Sits chair* U.R. *of desk, puts his feet up on desk chair*) Yep. Fixing this and fixing that. (*Sniffles, takes out his handkerchief;* PRICE *takes off his rubbers and throws them in the hallway;* DIETENHOFER *fills his pipe, shaking the tobacco out of the pouch and spilling a good deal on the carpet. With the manner of one opening a meeting.*) Well, sir! What's the good word?

DIETENHOFER. Oh-o-o-h, about the same, I guess. Everything's about the same as yesterday. Yep! How's it with you?

[*Strikes match and lights pipe.*]

MINICK. Oh-oh-oh, not much different. How about you, Price?

PRICE. Oh-oh-oh, so so. Not much of one thing or the other.

[*Takes out his pipe.*]

MINICK. Anything new over to the Home today?

DIETENHOFER. No—nothing special. Nothing special. (*Throws his burnt match under sofa;* PRICE *now knocks his pipe bowl against smoking table, spilling the heel on the carpet, then brings out large clasp-knife from pocket and opens it leisurely.*) Not smoking, Minick?

MINICK. No. Don't taste like anything when you got a cold.

PRICE. How *is* your cold?

MINICK. Well, if the weather'd let up——

DIETENHOFER. Weather's pretty bad, all right.

MINICK. Yes, sir—regular November. (*Sniffles.*) It's November, all right.

DIETENHOFER. Tha's what.

MINICK. Yes, sir! It's November.

DIETENHOFER. Yep.

MINICK. Yessir! (*A short pause.* PRICE *grinds in his pipe with the knife.*) Cut over through the park, did you?

[PRICE *has succeeded in loosening his pipe ashes; he looks around for a place to put them, sees a fancy vase on the bookcase, rises and gets it.*]

DIETENHOFER. Yah. Pretty wet, too.

MINICK. I was downtown this morning, though.

DIETENHOFER. You don't say? How was it?

[*Looking at window.*]

MINICK. Bad. Yes, sir—bad.

[PRICE *clinks his pipe against vase, and then places it on the floor by chair.*]

DIETENHOFER. (*Rising*) Blackening up in the West again. Means more rain. (*Crosses to* PRICE.) What did I tell you this morning, Price? Watch the West, I says—that's where she comes from. [*He takes* PRICE *up to the window.*]

MINICK. (*Rises, goes up*) Turn to snow most likely. That's November for you.

[DIETENHOFER *snaps up window shade so that he may see more clearly;* PRICE *goes to center window and snaps up its shade, which rolls around furiously.*]

DIETENHOFER. Ya—I guess you were right, Minick. Going to turn to snow. No more sitting out in the park this year.

[*Turning away a bit.*]

MINICK. Well, we set out pretty late at that. October.

[*Turning to him.*]

DIETENHOFER. October the 28th.

MINICK. Guess I set out too late. That's where I caught my cold.

DIETENHOFER. Well, a fellow can get a cold that way. Yep!

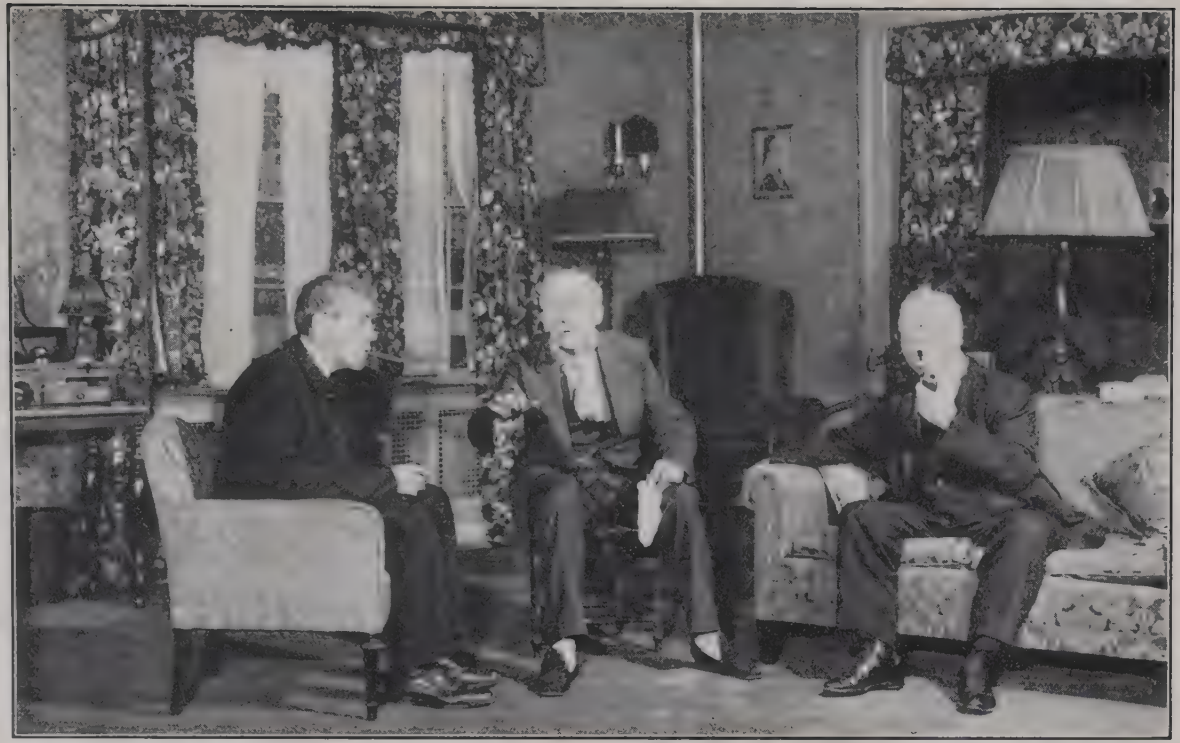
MINICK. I did, all right. Yessir!

PRICE. (*Who has been gazing out of window*) Say—there's a right pretty girl going along.

[*The others look.*]

DIETENHOFER. That's right.

MINICK. Trim figure, too.



"Minnick"

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PRICE. She's stopping for something. (*A pause.*) No—she's going ahead.

DIETENHOFER. Stopping again.

PRICE. No. She's going.

[*Watches her a second;* MINICK *goes below* PRICE.]

MINICK. There she goes! Down the street. Down the street. (*His voice takes on distance;* PRICE *returns to his chair.* MINICK *is back of chair, and resumes his seat at end of speech.*) Pretty busy street, all right. Lots of people go by. You know how many automobiles I counted in an hour yesterday! Two hundred and fifty-six! Sitting right there.

DIETENHOFER. (*Has been crossing to sofa; sits*) Wa-a-a-l, won't be so many from now on. Winter's coming on now, all right. Be May before we can sit out again. Yep!

MINICK. Yessir! May! May's a long time off. Pretty hard knowing what to do between now and then.

DIETENHOFER. That's right. Winter's a bad time.

MINICK. Yessir! With the park gone it's going to be pretty hard to fill in the time. I was thinking about it this morning.

PRICE. You got a nice place here.

[*Strikes match and lights cigar.*]

MINICK. Winter's a long time. Besides, generally folks in this room—company—one thing another. I've got my own room—but you can't do much of anything there.

DIETENHOFER. Oh, I don't know. There's always something to do.

MINICK. Well, of course you can take a walk,

but you got to walk pretty brisk, weather like this. Generally get a good nap after lunch, though. Then —one thing another comes up. First thing you know, it's six o'clock. Fred comes home with the evening paper. Some news in *that* as a rule. Then, after supper, I'm generally pretty tired, anyhow. Once in a while, though, Fred and I have a little game of dominoes before they go out.

DIETENHOFER. The big room over to the Home is pretty nice in winter.

PRICE. Get your pinochle game there.

DIETENHOFER. That's what. Too bad they don't let visitors play over there, Minick. We got some pretty smart pinochle heads. There's Garvey—Henderson—Schultz——

PRICE. D'you know what Henderson held last night! A *five hundred* hand!

MINICK. Gosh!

DIETENHOFER. Only bid four-fifty on it.

MINICK. Probably picked up something.

PRICE. Just twenty.

[*Takes out paper and starts to read.*]

DIETENHOFER. Yep. We have great times. They look out for your comfort over there pretty nice, Minick. They're paid to do it. Catch me going any place where I didn't pay my way.

MINICK. Well, I like to pay my way myself.

DIETENHOFER. They make you feel like somebody over to the Grant Home. A club, that's what it's like. A club, and may be a vacancy soon, too. Old Patterson's talking about going out to Los Angeles with a nephew or something.

PRICE. Expecting word any minute.

MINICK. No, sir! My son wouldn't hear of it. No, nor his wife, neither. Nettie wouldn't hear of it.

DIETENHOFER. I wouldn't live any other way. You're free. They got their rules, but outside of that you're free. You're never your own boss living the other way. Price here was through it. Weren't you, Price?

PRICE. What?

DIETENHOFER. You were living with your da'ter before you come to the Home. (*Turns to* MINICK.) Four children, she had.

PRICE. "Pa, don't do this. Pa, don't do that." Nossir!

DIETENHOFER. I've seen it. Seen it often.

PRICE. And running errands. "Spool of white No. 100." "Half a pint of double whippin' cream." "Ten cent loaf of gluten bread." And taking babies out wheelin' all the time.

DIETENHOFER. Hear all this talk nowadays about *young* folks. *Old* folks has some rights time I was a boy.

MINICK. Babies out wheelin'! Well, I guess that's one thing I won't ever have to do here. Blamed if I can understand what they're aiming at, these young people. I'm going to talk to Nettie about it—some day.

DIETENHOFER. Times are changing, that's all.

PRICE. It's the Unrest.

MINICK. Club meetings. Worrying about other people's children, instead of having some of their own. (*Rises and goes down to smoking table.*) Club meetings, like the one she's got coming here today—— (*Takes gavel, and hands it to* DIETENHOFER *who has risen.*) Here it is—that'll show you.

DIETENHOFER. (*Reading inscription on silver plate*) "Presented to Nettie B. Minick by her fellow members of the Home Relations Committee, Woman's Civic Aid, June 14, 1922." (*Weighs the gavel in his hand.*) Nice piece of wood, all right. Regular mahogany.

PRICE. (*Rises and goes to* R. *of* MINICK) Let me see it. (*Gauges its weight in his hand.*) More like teak. That's what it is—teakwood.

[MINICK *takes it, weighs it, hands it to* DIETENHOFER, *who also weighs it skeptically.* PRICE *returns to his seat.*]

DIETENHOFER. Well, maybe. (*Taps pipe with gavel, returns to his seat and drops gavel on sofa.*) Heigh-ho!

[MINICK *returns to his chair; there is a slight pause.*]

PRICE. (*Resuming his reading*) I see where the sun's coming out tomorrow.

[*Knocks ashes off cigar into vase; some fall on floor.*]

MINICK. That so?

PRICE. (*Reading*) "Official Weather Forecast. Cloudy today; fresh northerly winds."

MINICK. That's what they are.

PRICE. "Tomorrow fair. Temperature yesterday: Highest, 43, 3.45 P. M.; lowest, 34, 9 A. M."

MINICK. (*Pulling out watch*) It's five minutes to *three* now.

DIETENHOFER. (*Also takes out huge watch*) Seven minutes. There's a clock.

MINICK. (*Not even looking at it*) Ain't going. I set mine this morning by the Wrigley Building. It's now exactly—(*Waits for a second.*)—four and a half minutes to three.

DIETENHOFER. No, sir—you're fast.

MINICK. I ain't had this watch in a repair shop in eight years. That's what I think of it.

DIETENHOFER. Well, you're fast, just the same.

[*Falls to puffing again;* MINICK *sniffles;* PRICE *turns a page of the newspaper.*]

PRICE. The world of finance.

MINICK. How's it going?

PRICE. "Rails stand firm as market sags."

MINICK. Yeh? Well, I ain't bullish on rails.

DIETENHOFER. Market's been pretty good lately. A fella coulda made a tidy sum just knowing what to go into and when to go into it.

MINICK. We-e-ell, I don't fool around with stocks, much. Rather have a nice piece of property than all your stocks and new-fangled businesses.

DIETENHOFER. N-n-n-yeh! Ties up your money.

MINICK. Well, better than putting it in some wildcat business and losing it. (*Rises.*) If I was so minded I could tell you two gentlemen a case in point that I just found out about this morning. And I think it's a big mistake!

DIETENHOFER. What case was that?

MINICK. M-m-m-m—it's pretty confidential. But I don't know but what your advice might not be valuable. You're both business men of experience.

DIETENHOFER. I want you just to consider me at your service.

[*A large gesture. They shift a bit in their chairs, rather importantly.*]

MINICK. Well, sir! It's like this. (*Takes desk chair and draws it over to* DIETENHOFER.) What do you gentlemen think of the mail order business —as a business?

[PRICE *draws his chair over to them, dropping his paper on the floor.*]

DIETENHOFER. Do you mean from the aspect of an investment?——

MINICK. No, sir! I mean as a business to go into.

DIETENHOFER. Well, yes and no, is what I say.

PRICE. Somebody gone into it?

MINICK. Somebody! My son, Fred, that's who!

DIETENHOFER. You don't say!

MINICK. Yessir! And I've got to stop him before it's too late.

PRICE. How far have things gone?

MINICK. Just started up, near's I can find out. Fred's never said boo about it around the house. Not even to Nettie, I don't think. She wouldn't a let him do it, either.

DIETENHOFER. Tell us about it.

MINICK. Well, here I'd been cooped up in the house four days now. So this morning I got up, my cold was quite some better—Nettie was out doing something—so I says to myself, I says, "I'll just jump on the L and go down and say hello to Fred. Freshen me up!" So I goes down there. Big place full of desks and one of them smart Alecks asking you who do you want to see and have you got an appointment. I made short work of him. "Listen," I said, "I'm Fred Minick's father. Which one's his office?" By that time he looked pretty scared. And I'd marched right in, too, only he says pretty wilty by now, "Mr. Minick ain't in," he says. "He's over at his other place." Well, at that I smelled a rat right away. "Oh," I says, "he is, is he?" And this young sprat says, "Yes, he's always over there mornings." I never let on. "That's so!" I says. "Let's see, now. That number's two sixty—uh——" (*Turns to* PRICE.) "It's the Monadnock Building," the kid says. "I don't know the number."

PRICE. Good work!
DIETENHOFER. Did you find it? } (*Together*)

MINICK. (*A gesture that means "Leave it to*

me!") Marched right up to the elevator fella and says, "Party name of Minick got offices here?" "Eleven-seventeen," he says. (*Imitates the man's tone.*) And sure enough, there it was painted on the door: "Twentieth Century Mail Order Company." And down underneath, "Frederick Minick —James J. Corey!" That's a friend of his.

PRICE. Two of them!

DIETENHOFER. Did you go in?

MINICK. Had my hand on the door when I says to myself, "No! I want to see Nettie first about this." Fred's a funny boy. Got to handle him just so. Ever since he was a youngster. So! That's the situation in a nutshell, gentlemen, and I would certainly appreciate having your advice.

DIETENHOFER. Well, now that you've laid all the facts before me—I don't know, but I will say this, here and now. If you take two young fellas inexperienced——

[NETTIE'S *key is heard in the outer door.*]

MINICK. Here's Nettie now. (*Rises.* NETTIE *enters carrying two bundles, one a loaf of bread, the other a smaller bundle. Elaborately casual.*) Hello, Nettie!

[DIETENHOFER *and* PRICE *rise.* NETTIE *stops short as she sees the old man. A quick look takes in the disorder of the rooms.*]

NETTIE. Oh, Father! What are you——! I told you not——

[*Her look and gesture express more than her words. Picks up vase and puts it on bookcase.*]

MINICK. (*Explaining*) Well, Mr. Dietenhofer and——

[PRICE *is* R. *of* MINICK.]

NETTIE. It was all right yesterday, and—but——

[*Picks up newspapers and exits to passage.*]

DIETENHOFER. We only came in to keep Mr. Minick here——

NETTIE. Lula! Lula! Of course I was glad to have you sit with Father Minick this week, but today—(LULA *enters from the passage.*)—Lula, take these. (*Stuffs newspapers into her hands.*) No, wait a minute! (*Gives her the two bundles.*) That's for the sandwiches—and hurry. I'm terribly late—I thought I'd never get—— (*As* LULA *goes.*) And bring in the dust pan and whisk broom. (*During the next few speeches* NETTIE *is flying about the room in a desperate effort to set it to rights before her guests arrive; takes gavel from sofa, replaces it on smoking table.*) Of course I know it's been hard on you, Father, being in—but just today—(*Pulls armchair in place.*) —so inconvenient—my whole committee—— Come tomorrow —come Thursday—come any other day! I'd be only too glad—— (*Takes desk chair and replaces it; goes around them to table; they turn completely around watching her; she hands* DIETENHOFER *his hat.*) Father, I *did* tell you I had some women coming today, didn't I! (*As she hands the hat to* DIETENHOFER.) Here!

MINICK. Well, well! Nothing to fuss about!

NETTIE. Nothing to fuss about! Look at this room! Lula!

[*Goes* L. *to passage.*]

DIETENHOFER. Well, ma'am, I assure you we've got our own place to go to——

[*A step* R.]

NETTIE. Lula!

PRICE. Maybe you want us to go?

[LULA *enters from passage, carrying dust pan and whisk broom.*]

NETTIE. Here! Give me those. You go ahead with the sand—— Why, you haven't your uniform on!

LULA. Hain't had time yet. I been——

NETTIE. Well, go ahead. Don't talk! It's after three now! (LULA *goes.* NETTIE *calls.*) And don't forget to cut them very thin!

[*Kneels with dust pan and whisk broom in front of sofa.*]

MINICK. I'll do that for you.

NETTIE. No, Father. You can help your friends on with their things.

DIETENHOFER. It's all right. Don't trouble yourself. We can put them on.

MINICK. (*Eagerness in his tone*) Coming around again tomorrow? I'll be here.

DIETENHOFER. Well, we'll be pretty busy tomorrow.

[*Goes up and gets his coat.*]

MINICK. Well——

NETTIE. (*Crossing* R. *and whisking up ashes by armchair*) And another thing. I was furious when I came home and found you were out. You weren't fit to go out.

MINICK. Well, it's a good stroke I went. And I want to talk to you.

[*Sniffles.*]

NETTIE. Well, you see what happened—your cold's worse. (*Brushing at* PRICE'S *feet.*) Your coat's up there, Mr.—uh——

PRICE. Huh? Oh!

[*Moves at last up to easy chair; he and* DIETENHOFER *struggle with their coats and mufflers.*]

NETTIE. Lula! Lula!

[*Crosses* L. *and exits into passage with broom and pan.*]

DIETENHOFER. (*Crossing* D.L. *to* MINICK) Pretty high strung, ain't she?

MINICK. She don't mean anything.

DIETENHOFER. Well—they don't ever mean anything, but—just the same——

[*Starts* R.]

PRICE. (*Coming* D.R. *of* MINICK *and touching his arm*) I had it.

DIETENHOFER. (*Turning at door*) You mull it over in your mind just in case that vacancy does happen to——

NETTIE. (*Reëntering*) Are you all ready?

DIETENHOFER. Well, Ma'am, I wish you good-day.

[*Extends his hand.*]

NETTIE. Good-bye.

[*Is compelled to take his hand; otherwise he won't go.*]

PRICE. (*Also extending his hand*) Good-bye.

[*She takes his hand;* DIETENHOFER *crosses to door.*]

NETTIE. Good-bye. Father, would you mind bringing in a few chairs from the dining-room? (MINICK *starts for the dining-room;* NETTIE *quickly adds:*) *After* you've seen your friends out!

DIETENHOFER. (*Stops, considers*) Where did I put my rubbers?

NETTIE. (*Now above* D.L. *end of table*) They're not in here. Perhaps you can put them on outside.

DIETENHOFER. I know. They're in the hall.

PRICE. That's so—they are.

[*They exit into hallway.*]

NETTIE. (*Crossing above table to window, where she starts to straighten the shades*) Father, you will get them out of here, won't you?

MINICK. What do you think I found out this morning?

NETTIE. I don't know, Father. Tell me later.

MINICK. What do you think Fred's done?

[*The noise of the old men stamping into their rubbers is heard.*]

NETTIE. Please, Father. The meeting'll be starting.

MINICK. (*Coming just above her*) Fred's gone into the business.

NETTIE. (*Turns quickly*) What! How do you know? Mail order!

MINICK. Yessir! And you and I got to stop him.

[*Crossing above table to* D.L.]

NETTIE. But how do you know he's gone into it? Who told you?

[*Comes below table to* D.L.; R. *of* MINICK.]

MINICK. Saw it on the door. Fred and Mr. Corey.

NETTIE. Where? What door?

MINICK. 1117 Monadnock Building. What'll we do!

NETTIE. Monadnock Building—Father, tell me something. Did you——?

DIETENHOFER. (*Reëntering*) Well, we're going.

PRICE. (*Reëntering and crossing to* C.) Where's my newspaper?

NETTIE. What?

PRICE. I want my newspaper.

NETTIE. What newspaper?

PRICE. My newspaper. Left it right here some place.

NETTIE. Oh, please! Can't you get another newspaper!

PRICE. Get another? Only had this one an hour!

NETTIE. (*Almost beside herself, going near passage*) Lulu! Lulu!

MINICK. I'll get it.

NETTIE. No, Father, keep out of the kitchen!

[LULA, *who has changed to her black dress, appears in passage door.*]

LULA. Huh?

NETTIE. Lula, get that newspaper I just——(*The doorbell rings. Her arms go out in a gesture to the heavens. She turns to* MINICK.) Now there you are! Lula, answer the door. It's them. No—wait! Get your apron on. (LULA *vanishes into passage;* NETTIE *turns and sees that* PRICE *is standing immovable.*) Oh, I'll get your paper. (*To* MINICK.) You've got me just all unstrung.

[*Dashes off into passage.* MINICK *comes above table to* U.R.; DIETENHOFER *discovers something the matter with one of his rubbers, and finds that he must sit down on desk chair to fix it.*

PRICE *sits on sofa.* LULA, *fastening her apron, enters* D.L. *and crosses. She discovers that the apron is wrong side out; reverses it; exits into the hall.* NETTIE *follows on, bringing the newspaper, now merely a ball.*]

NETTIE. And now if you—— (*Sees they are seated again.*) Good heavens!

[PRICE *and* DIETENHOFER *rise, and she stuffs the paper into* PRICE'S *hands.*]

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. (*Off*) Good afternoon!

NETTIE. Now, Father, you see—here they are! (*To the others.*) Now you *are* going right out, aren't you?

[MRS. SMALLRIDGE *and* MISS CRACKENWALD *enter, followed by* LULA.]

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. Good afternoon! Well! Are we the first?

NETTIE. How are you, Mrs. Smallridge! Miss Crackenwald!

MISS CRACKENWALD. (*Very crisp*) Afternoon.

NETTIE. Lula, take the ladies' things.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. (*Beaming*) Well, Mr. Minick! And how are you these dull November days! Manage to keep happy?

MINICK. Oh, I manage.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. That's good.

[LULA *has taken* MISS CRACKENWALD'S *coat.*]

MISS CRACKENWALD. I'll keep my hat on.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. (*In the tone of one addressing a small boy*) I suppose these are friends of yours come to while away a rainy afternoon. I remember when Mr. Smallridge's poor dear father was with us, how he loved to have his friends in. My! Bright and active right up to the last day.

MINICK. (*Expanding a little*) Yes. Yessir! I'd like you to meet these gentlemen . . . Mr. Eugene Dietenhofer—Mrs.—uh——

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. Mrs. Smallridge.

MINICK. And Mr. J. W. Price.

DIETENHOFER. Pleased to meet you.
PRICE. Pleased to make your acquaintance. } (*Together*)

[NETTIE *is politely dying in the background.*]

MINICK. (*Not wishing to ignore the other guest*) And this is Mrs. . . . ?

MISS CRACKENWALD. (*Icily*) *Miss* Crackenwald.

MINICK. Miss?

NETTIE. Oh! (*To the others.*) These gentlemen were just going.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. Well, I hope we aren't chasing you away. Bundle up good and warm. It's very penetrating out.

PRICE. (*Crossing to her, throws back his coat and displays a maroon sweater, with initial "C" on it*) Never fear. Got M' grandson's sweater on.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. That's wise. You know Lake Michigan in November.

DIETENHOFER. (*Catches* MISS CRACKENWALD'S *eye*) I always wear a good piece of old-fashioned flannel right inside my underwear.

[*Unbuttons part of his shirt to show this in triumph.* MISS CRACKENWALD'S *eyebrows go up slightly.*]

NETTIE. I'm afraid I must ask you to go now. The meeting is going to get under way.

DIETENHOFER. Well, good-bye.

[*Starts off.*]

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. Good-bye.
PRICE. (*Starts to cross* R.) Well, I hope——

[*He never finishes;* NETTIE *propels him out;* DIETENHOFER *and* PRICE *go into the hall;* MINICK *takes them to the door.* NETTIE *turns to* MISS CRACKENWALD *with a little semi-exclamation of apology and relief.*]

NETTIE. Well—won't you sit down?
MISS CRACKENWALD. (*Glances at her wrist watch, crosses to sofa and sits on upper edge*) After three. Do they all know the meeting's been shifted here?
NETTIE. I notified them.

[*The doorbell rings.*]

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. (*Crossing and sitting* L. *of* MISS CRACKENWALD) Clara Whitney took sick very suddenly, didn't she? This flu. Do you know I remarked the last time I saw her——
LIL. (*Looks in from hall*) Hello, Net!
NETTIE. Hello, Lil! Lula!

[*Beckons* LULA *to take* LIL'S *wraps.* LIL *enters;* NETTIE *sits in chair above desk.*]

LIL. How do you do, ladies? (*A meaning look toward hall and then to* NETTIE.) I see you've been entertaining.

[LULA *enters and crosses* U.R. *through dining-room and off.* LIL *sits in desk chair.*]

NETTIE. Yes. I—I hope no one's been inconvenienced by the change in plans.
MINICK. (*Reënters from hall and starts to sit chair* D.R.) Well! Starting to gather, huh?

NETTIE. (*Checking him with her words*) Father, you were going to bring in the chairs.

MINICK. All right. All right. (*As he goes up to dining-room.*) What's the meeting about? Something important?

[*He exits into dining-room.*]

(*Next three speeches spoken simultaneously*)

MISS CRACKENWALD. I don't see why people can't be on time. I was here on time and I've had a very full calendar today. And my head is simply splitting.

NETTIE. (*Sotto voce to* LIL) Lil, I must talk to you.

LIL. What's the matter?

NETTIE. (*Rising*) I'm so sorry. Why don't you take your hat off and be comfortable? Go right back into my room. You'll find everything. (*Crossing above table to* D.L.) Lula!

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. I'll show her. (*Rising.*) Don't bother Lula. I know how it is. (*Crossing* D.L.) Why don't you take an aspirin, Miss Crackenwald?

MISS CRACKENWALD. (*Following her; stonily*) I've had six.

[*They both exit into passage.* MINICK *enters from dining-room with two dining-room chairs and places them in front of sofa.*]

NETTIE. (*Crossing to* LIL) Did you know the boys were in business?

[MINICK *listens, chair in hand.*]

LIL. Business?

MINICK. What you going to do about it?

"Minnick"

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NETTIE. (*Silences him with a gesture*) Did you know that Fred and Jim had gone ahead with that crazy mail order scheme?

LIL. They haven't!

NETTIE. They have!

LIL. I don't believe it! How do you know?

MINICK. *I* found it out——

NETTIE. Father Minick. Monadnock Building. Saw it on the door.

LIL. What are you talking about?

NETTIE. I'm telling you that Fred has probably taken every penny we've got in the world— (*The doorbell rings.*) —and dumped it into this—this idiotic——

MINICK. Yessir!

LIL. Then Jim has, too. Net, if he has——

[MRS. SMALLRIDGE *and* MISS CRACKENWALD *enter* D.L., *talking.* LULA *follows them on, crosses* R. *and exits into hallway.*]

MISS CRACKENWALD. (*Comes in front of sofa*) . . . in view of the rather exhaustive survey—— Still nobody else here?

NETTIE. (*Following* LULA *into hall*) Here is someone now.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. (*To* MINICK) Helping to do your bit, I see.

MINICK. That's two. Got two more.

[*Exits into dining-room above table, as* MRS. LIPPINCOTT *and* MISS STACK *enter from the hall;* LULA *takes and places their coats in hall.* MRS. LIPPINCOTT *is a general. Hers is the executive mind. She thinks nationally. Her dream is an office in the General Federation of Women's Clubs.* MISS STACK *lobbies* MRS. LIPPINCOTT. MRS. SMALLRIDGE *comes* R.C. *and sits on sofa* D.L. *end.*]

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. How do you do, ladies!
MISS STACK. How-do!

[*The other women return the greeting.* LULA *crosses back of ladies into dining-room and off.*]

MISS CRACKENWALD. We've been holding the meeting for you.

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. (*She is about* C.) I think you know, Miss Crackenwald, that if there's one thing I pride myself on, it's punctuality. Miss Stack and I had to go to Clara Whitney's to learn that the meeting had been transferred here.

MISS STACK. Mrs. Minick seems to have forgotten to notify us.

NETTIE. But I did! I spent the morning telephoning.

[MINICK *comes in above table with two more chairs and places them in front of sofa.*]

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. That's strange. My secretary is generally very reliable.

MISS CRACKENWALD. I don't think we should wait for the rest.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. Yes—let's begin.

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. I don't know why we couldn't have met over at my house, as long as Clara Whitney was sick.

NETTIE. Shall we start now?

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. How can we start without a quorum, Mrs. Minick?

NETTIE. That's true. We haven't, have we?

MISS STACK. We have only six. Seven is a quorum.

LIL. Well, now I know Marge Diamond is coming. Can't we sort of kind of start, meanwhile?

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. I don't think it would hurt, this once. I move that we go ahead and start.

LIL. I second the motion.

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. You can't introduce a motion until the meeting's called to order.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. Then how are we going to start?

[MINICK *is following all this with breathless interest, standing above table* D.L. *edge.*]

NETTIE. What is your pleasure, ladies, in this matter? Mrs. Diamond is coming eventually.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. Isn't there some way we can start?

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. We could, under Section Five, Article Eight, suspend the rules with the unanimous consent of the assemblage.

[MISS CRACKENWALD *sits. From two of three of those assembled: "All right," "Yes." "Well, why don't we?"*]

MINICK. What's the meeting going to be about, anyway?

[*They all look at him. A look from* NETTIE *to* LIL *that says "Help me!" A little buzz of conversation in the group.*]

NETTIE. Thanks for bringing in the chairs, Father.

MINICK. That's all right, Nettie my girl.

LIL. (*Goes to him above table*) Now, Mr. Minick, you don't want to stay and listen to a lot of dull business, do you? Why don't you take a nap?

MINICK. Just got up. (*Crosses above her to* U.R.) Don't want to sleep my life away.

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. (*Crosses and sits second chair from* R.) I think we can begin now, Madam Chairman!

[MISS STACK *sits* L. *of* MRS. LIPPINCOTT.]

NETTIE. I shall call the meeting in a moment, Mrs. Lippincott.

[*Crosses to desk and gets note paper, then goes up to* MINICK.]

MISS CRACKENWALD. It's getting later and later.

NETTIE. (*To* MINICK, *in an undertone*) Father, you don't want to stay here, do you?

MINICK. I like it here.

NETTIE. You'll have to be very quiet.

MINICK. I will. Quiet as a mouse.

[*Goes up to easy chair and sits.*]

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. (*To* MISS STACK) This is a pretty room, isn't it? With the Park and all.

[LIL *sits chair* R. *of table.*]

MISS STACK. Y-yes.

NETTIE. (*Sitting armchair* D.R., *taps three times with gavel*) Ladies! (*They are all attention.*) The meeting will please come to order. The—uh—first business of the day is the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting. (*Drops into sudden informality.*) Oh, Marge isn't here.

MISS CRACKENWALD. Why *she* was ever made secretary——!

NETTIE. We can defer the reading of the minutes until Mrs. Diamond gets here. Is there any unfinished business?

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. (*Leaps to her feet*) Madam Chairman!

NETTIE. Mrs. Lippincott?

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. I call for the orders of the day. I believe the chair is in error.

NETTIE. Oh!

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. Failing the reading of the minutes the next business is the Reports of Boards and Standing Committees, followed by Reports of Special Select Committees and Special Orders. Then, and not until then, comes Unfinished Business.

NETTIE. The Chair stands corrected.

[MRS. LIPPINCOTT *sits.*]

MINICK. (*Impressed*) Gosh!

NETTIE. (*Consulting a paper*) We'll have the sub-committee reports. The sub-committee on Playgrounds— (*Her voice drops from its official note to an everyday tone.*) Oh, that's Clara Whitney, and of course she's sick. . . . Well, then, the report of the sub-committee on Juvenile Delinquency— (*Her voice drops again.*) Now I talked to Emma Osgood over the phone this morning and she said she'd positively be here. Of course she lives way over north.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. Tries to do too much.

MISS STACK. (*Searching among her papers*) Oh. Mrs. Osgood asked me to say that she will submit her Juvenile Delinquency report at the next meeting— (*Rises.*) She has had some difficulty in verifying her statistics on— (*Referring to her paper.*) Group C, boys of fifteen and sixteen.

NETTIE. Oh—well—thank you.

[MISS STACK *sits.*]

MINICK. (*Rises and takes a step down*) Say, I'll tell you a good one on Fred time he was fifteen.

NETTIE. (*Her finger to her lips, recalling his promise to be quiet*) Father, remember you——

MINICK. That's right. That's right.

[*Sits.*]

NETTIE. Well—"sub-committee on Home Survey"—well, anyway, you're here, Miss Crackenwald.

MISS CRACKENWALD. I am.

NETTIE. (*A little buzz of talk has broken out*) Ladies! We will now listen to——

MISS CRACKENWALD. (*Rising*) Madam Chairman—I was asked——

[*The telephone rings.* MISS CRACKENWALD *pauses.*]

NETTIE. I'm awfully sorry. (MINICK *half rises to answer;* NETTIE *waves him back. Into phone.*) Hello!—Yes.—No, Mrs. Diamond's not here. We're waiting for her ourselves——

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. (*To* MISS STACK) We're not getting anything done.

NETTIE. (*Into phone*) Her home? Don't you know where she is? All right. I'll tell her to call you. (*Hangs up and comes back to her chair.*) I'm so sorry. For Marge, of course. (*There is a little buzz of talk;* NETTIE *raps for order.*) Ladies! The meeting will come to order.

MISS CRACKENWALD. (*Has a sheaf of papers in her hands*) I was asked, on August the tenth, of the current year, to undertake a survey of some of the homes in the districts where conditions demand attention, with a veiw to evolving a new plan—(LULA *appears in the dining-room doorway. She is flying signals of distress. She beckons to* NETTIE, *pantomiming meanwhile.* NETTIE *shakes her head and with a glance tries to make* LULA *vanish.* LULA *persists and works to* D.L. *above table.*) —for the es-

tablishing between parents and children that bond which is so necessary if we are to develop a real American citizenry in the generation now flowering into manhood and womanhood. Accordingly, on the morning of the sixteenth of August——

[LIL *has joined* NETTIE *in the pantomime in an effort to shoo* LULA *off.* LULA *is insisting. The interruption is now a definite one.* LULA *is hissing "I got to see you about the sandwiches."*]

MINICK. (*Rising, to* NETTIE) Lula wants to talk to you.

LULA. I got to see you about the sandwiches——

[*In a hissing whisper.*]

NETTIE. (*Rises and crosses* L. *very irritated*) I'm terribly sorry, everybody. I won't be a second . . . Lula, what do you mean——

[LULA *exits* D.L. *followed by* NETTIE *who slams door. An embarrassed silence.*]

MISS STACK. The meeting should have been at your house, Mrs. Lippincott.

LIL. Well, you know Nettie has had a great deal to put up with today, Miss Stack.

MISS CRACKENWALD. I might as well sit down.

[*Does so.*]

MINICK. (*Rises and comes down to* R. *of* MRS. LIPPINCOTT) Well! Kind of a recess, eh? I'm Fred's father. I don't think I caught your name.

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. Mrs. Thornton Lippincott.

MINICK. Well, anyway, about Fred. I was going to tell you——

NETTIE. (*Reënters flustered, apologetic, almost tearful*) I don't know what I can say to you . . . Stupid maid. . . . It's been a terrible day!

[*Motions* MINICK *back to his seat; goes to chair, assumes again the rôle of chairman.* MISS STACK *takes a few folded sheets of paper from her bag and fans herself, looking about to see if a door or window can't be opened.*]

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. 'Tis close, isn't it?

NETTIE. Come to order, ladies! We were—uh—we were just taking up——

MISS STACK. (*Rises suddenly; at same instant* MISS CRACKENWALD *does likewise; they speak simultaneously*) Madam Chairman!

MISS CRACKENWALD. Madam Chairman!

NETTIE. Miss—uh——

MINICK. (*Points to* MISS STACK) She was up first. The little one.

NETTIE. Father! Miss Stack?

MISS STACK. I rise to a point of personal privilege. I move——

[*The doorbell rings.*]

MARGE. (*Off*) May I come in?

NETTIE. Oh, it's Mrs. Diamond now!

MARGE. (*Enters*) Hello, everybody! Not late, am I?

NETTIE. Only an hour.

LIL. Hello, Marge! } (*Together*)
MARGE. Hello, Lil! }

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. Please, ladies! I have a most important engagement at five.

NETTIE. Marge, you knew we were meeting at three. Being secretary, it seems to me you might at least——

MARGE. I'm sorry—I was held up. And I can't stay. I promised Natalie Gaige I'd look in at the Blake reception.

NETTIE. You've got to stay.

MISS STACK. We haven't a quorum without you.

MARGE. But Irma's waiting downstairs in the electric.

[MINICK *goes to window and looks out.*]

MISS CRACKENWALD. Well, really——!

LIL. (*Rises and comes to* MARGE) Now, Marge Diamond, listen to me! If the rest of us are willing to give our time, surely you ought to have some sense of responsibility.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. I have two utter strangers coming to dinner—business friends of Mr. Smallridge—yet, here I am!

LIL. You sit right down in that chair, Marge Diamond.

[MARGE *sits in desk chair.*]

MARGE. (*Consulting her wrist watch*) I can stay just—five minutes and not a second——

MINICK. (*Pointing out of window*) There's your friend! You can see her right from here.

MARGE. What! (*Rises.*) Just a minute, Nettie—— (*Goes to window and throws it open; the wind sweeps through the room, scattering papers on the desk.* NOTE: *wind blows papers off desk by use of blacksmith's rotary forge back of set. Calls, leaning out.*) Yoo hoo! Irma! Yoo hoo! Listen!

NETTIE. (*Rising and clutching at the flying papers*) Oh, my goodness! Marge! Marge, put that window down!

[LIL *helps* MINICK *gather up the papers.*]

MARGE. (*Still yelling out the window*) I've got to stay five minutes. Will you wait for me! *Wait for me!* (*Slams down the window and turns back to* NETTIE.) What did you say?

NETTIE. (*Sits chair* D.R. *again*) Marge, won't you please sit down now?

MARGE. (*Outraged dignity; sits* R. *of* MRS. LIPPINCOTT) Well—I am. (LIL *returns to her seat.*) Why don't you go ahead?

NETTIE. With Mrs. Diamond here now——

MINICK. Say! (*He is speaking from the window seat just above desk.*) There was a party called you on the telephone.

NETTIE. Father!!

MINICK. (*To* NETTIE) You forgot.

NETTIE. Father! It wasn't important, Marge. Now——

MARGE. (*Rises*) Who was it?

NETTIE. It wasn't anything.

MINICK. I remember. It was her house. (MARGE *goes to phone.*) Your house called you up. Wants you to call them.

MARGE. Why didn't you—— (*Into phone.*) Dorchester 1653. (*To the others.*) Mamma's taking care of Melville. It's Miss Eaton's day out. I hope—— (*Into phone.*) Yes, that's right.

[*Short pause; she sits telephone stool.*]

NETTIE. Oh, dear! Well, the question is, shall we go back and have the minutes read now that Mrs. Diamond has come?

MISS STACK. I move that the minutes be read.

(*Simultaneously*)

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. I second the motion.

MARGE. Hulda, this is Mrs. Diamond. Listen, did Mother call me?

NETTIE. It's been moved and seconded that we go back and have the Recording Secretary read the minutes. Are there any remarks?

MISS CRACKENWALD. Well, it does seem to me——!

NETTIE. Oh, Miss Crackenwald! All those in favor say Aye.

CHORUS. Aye.

NETTIE. Opposed?

MISS CRACKENWALD. No.

NETTIE. The motion is carried.

MARGE. Mother, what do you——

NETTIE. Oh, Marge——

MOTHER. It's about Melville——} (*Together*)

MARGE. (*To* NETTIE) Just a minute, Nettie. (*Into the phone.*) What's the matter with him?

MOTHER. He's broken something——

MARGE. Well, what?

MOTHER. Your best lamp.

MARGE. Not the big one in the hall?

MOTHER. Yes.

MARGE. Oh! Well, where were you—you brought up children of your own——

MOTHER. I was out in the kitchen—when he——

MARGE. I don't see why——

MOTHER. —hit it with his velocipede.

MARGE. With what?

MOTHER. His velocipede——

MARGE. Every time you stay with him! Let me talk to him—oh——

NETTIE. Oh, Marge, please——

MARGE. (*Rises*) Just a minute, Nettie—— (*Into*

HULDA. Who?

[NOTE: *These voices are not heard by audience, but only done to facilitate* MARGE'S *pauses.*]

MARGE. This is Mrs. Diamond. Did Mother call me?

HULDA. Wait a minute.

phone.) Melville. Melville, this is mamma. What were you doing in the hall in the first place?

MELVILLE. Riding my velocipede.

MARGE. But you're not allowed to ride your velocipede out there—that was one of mamma's best lamps—— (MELVILLE *starts crying.*) Now, don't cry! (*More crying.*) Stop that crying, Melville Diamond, and tell me—— (*He talks incoherently.*) Talk plainly. (*Same business.*) Take your fingers out of your mouth.

MELVILLE. I haven't got my fingers in my mouth.

MARGE. Well, what have you got in your mouth?

MELVILLE. My watch.

MARGE. Good heavens! Take it out! Take it out of your mouth this minute, mamma says. And listen to me. Mamma says you can't have your velocipede again for a long time. You're a naughty, naughty boy! (*Hangs up, turns to others.*) My Chinese lamp that Al gave me for my anniversary.

NETTIE. I'm sorry about your lamp, but really, Marge, we've got to get on. We've just voted to go back and have you read the minutes.

MARGE. What minutes?

NETTIE. Marge! *Your* minutes. The minutes of the last meeting.

MARGE. Why, I didn't think this was a regular meeting, Nettie. When Hulda gave me your message——

NETTIE. Do you mean to say you didn't bring them?

MARGE. I had no idea you'd want them today. I thought it was sort of a special meeting.

MINICK. Didn't she bring it?

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. Can't we get on, then? Miss Crackenwald!

[MISS CRACKENWALD *rises.*]

NETTIE. Yes, please.

MISS CRACKENWALD. Well, if I may be assured of a few uninterrupted moments. (*Looks at* MARGE; MARGE *sits in desk chair.*) Following the collapse of the plan to bring parents and children together in closer accord through the medium of the school house—I was asked, on August tenth of the current year— (*Here* MARGE *rises, goes to phone stool;* NETTIE *motions her to sit.* MISS CRACKENWALD *sees her and repeats.*) —of the current year— (MARGE *sits phone stool and smiles at* MISS CRACKENWALD, *apparently all attention now.*) —to undertake a survey of some of the homes in the districts where conditions demand special attention, with a view to evolving a new plan for establishing between parents and children that bond which is so necessary. This is indeed a most vital work. As our Federation president, Louisa Stout Breckenridge, said so concisely— (*Punctuates the word with a gesture.*) —in her keynote speech at the convention in Springfield, "The youth of today is the citizen of tomorrow." (MARGE *has been edging toward the door and now quietly tiptoes into hallway.*) It is with the training of that youth that we concern ourselves here today. (MARGE *slams outer door.*) And how can we better bring that about than by encouraging that youth to emulate the admirable qualities of that sturdy stock from which has—uh—sprung—the people who make up our population today—who make up our population today. (*Shuffles three or four sheets of her paper but resumes reading from the top sheet again.* LULA *enters from the dining-room carrying a silver platter of fancy sandwiches and pitcher of orange juice with glasses. These she places on table. It is a quiet entrance, but the plates as they are set down clatter a little.*) Now—uh— (*Her platform voice and manner return.*) —our problem then, specifically, is to inculcate in the new generation a

greater love and affection for the traditions of the old. As the logical medium for the furtherance of this ideal condition we have hit upon the Home. Bring Parent and Child together in the Home. Keep the child in the home by making that home more attractive than the streets—more entertaining than the motion picture palace—more alluring than the dance hall. To this end let us adopt as our slogan, "Every Home a Club." Let us launch the Every Home a Club Movement. The boy and girl will not wander from the fireside if it holds for him the same games and pastimes that he is offered in the billiard parlors and pool rooms, in the corner drug or cigar stores——

MINICK. (*Who has been growing more and more interested and restless during this speech, now reaches the point where he can no longer contain himself. He comes over facing her*) Now right there is where you're all wrong!

NETTIE. Father! You must not interrupt. You must not——

[MISS CRACKENWALD *sits in disgust.*]

MINICK. Now, now! You're on the wrong track and I can prove it to you.

NETTIE. Father, not now. You can't!

[LIL *rises.*]

MINICK. I can so! Yessir! Because now you're talking about something I've seen with my own eyes. And this was it. There were six Hassauer boys that lived right across the street from us in Bloomington——

[NETTIE *is distressed and goes up by desk facing up.*]

Nettie, you've heard Fred talk of 'em—as fine boys as ever you'd want to see——

But run, run, run every night. Eat their supper and out. Got so their pa and ma practically never saw em——

So they got the idea of buying a billiard table to keep 'em in—had one sent down from Chicago——

[*Turns and finds he has suddenly lost his audience, suddenly dries up.*]

Mrs. Smallridge. (*As she crosses* R.) Are we going?

Minick. What are you doing? Busting up? I hope I ain't discouraged

[*All women rise in indignation.*]

Mrs. Lippincott. This is really!

Miss Stack. Yes, indeed!

[*Crosses* R. *and exits.*]

Miss Crackenwald. (*Crossing* L.) Mrs. Minick, I'm afraid I shall have to go.

[*Exits* D.L.]

Mrs. Lippincott. (*Turning to* Nettie *and* Lil) I move that we adjourn until the twenty-second and meet at my house.

Lil. I don't think that's in order, Mrs. Lippincott.

Mrs. Lippincott. A motion to adjourn is always in order, Mrs. Corey.

[*Indignantly sweeping toward door* R. *and exits.*]

[*Follows the other out.*]

you. Plenty other good work you girls can do. (*Turns and sees her.*) You got a good head on you!

[MRS. CRACKENWALD *re-enters from* L. *and crosses.*]

[*Ignoring him, she continues to cross.*]

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. (*Reënters, her coat half on*) Good day, Mrs. Minick.

MISS STACK. (*Following her leader as always*) Good day, Mrs. Minick.

MISS CRACKENWALD. Good afternoon.

(FRED *enters from the hall.*]

FRED. Well, well! I didn't know this was going on. Hello there, ladies! Howdy-do, Miss Crackenwald!

[MINICK, *crestfallen that he has broken up the meeting, crosses to* D.L. *end of table standing near sandwich platter.*]

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. (*From hallway*) Good evening, Mr. Minick. My, it must be late!

FRED. Oh, not going, are you?

MRS. LIPPINCOTT. I'm afraid we must.

[*Exits, followed by* MISS STACK *and* MISS CRACKENWALD.]

FRED. (*To them in hall*) Well, I'm sorry! I'd ask you to stay to dinner, only I've been married long enough to know better. (*To* NETTIE.) Haven't I, old lady! (*Pats her shoulder. Looks at her. In undertone.*) What's the matter?

NETTIE. (*Pushes him away and turns up stage*) Please!

MISS CRACKENWALD. (*Popping head in doorway*) Good-day.

MINICK. (*Standing investigating the sandwiches*) Here's the sandwiches. Ladies forgot to eat the sandwiches.

FRED. Anything wrong?

LIL. Net'll tell you.

[MRS. SMALLRIDGE *reënters buttoning her coat.*]

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. Well, good-bye, Nettie.

NETTIE. Good-bye.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. Good-bye, Mr. Minick.

MINICK. You want to try one of those. Pretty good.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE. No, I don't want to spoil my dinner. Well, good-bye. Good-bye, Fred. Good-bye, Nettie. (*From doorway and then exits.*) Such a nice meeting.

LIL. Can I do anything for you, Net?

[NETTIE *shakes her head.*]

FRED. What's eating you girls, anyhow?

LIL. I'll 'phone you right after dinner, and I'll probably bring Jim over. (*Crosses* D.R.) Good-bye. Good-bye, Fred.

[*Exits.*]

FRED. For heaven's sakes, Net, why the martyr stuff! What's the matter!

NETTIE. Don't speak to me!

FRED. Don't be so tragic. What's happened?

MINICK. Fred, Nettie and I want to talk to you.

FRED. Huh?

[*Still bewildered.*]

NETTIE. (*In desperation*) Father Minick, won't you please leave Fred and me alone, now!

FRED. Perhaps you'd better, Dad.

MINICK. (*Starts toward passage*) Well, all right. But I want to talk to you. Yessir!

NETTIE. Oh!

FRED. For God's sake, Nettie, what is this all about?

NETTIE. (*Regards him rather wildly a moment*) About! (*Her voice breaking.*) I'll tell you what it's about. It's about you and him and me and everything else! That's what it's about!

[*Crosses* D.R. *and sits in armchair. Is half crying.*]

FRED. Well, what have I——? Has Father done something?—What is it?

NETTIE. (*Now deadly calm*) It's just this, Fred Minick. I was good enough for you to bring your father into this house and saddle him on me all day long, every day—good enough to have him humiliate me before all these women and probably lose me my chairmanship that it's taken me months—and that Mrs. Lippincott—the audacity——

FRED. (*Crosses to her and puts his arm around her to comfort her*) Oh, Nettie—I'm terribly sorry. Now, you're just tired.

NETTIE. (*Pushes him away, rises and crosses* C.) Oh, yes! I was good enough for that! But when it came to confiding in your wife that you were risking God knows how much money in a business that you don't know any more about than a child—that's different, I suppose! Oh, yes!

FRED. (*A sigh, to himself. He knows the storm is upon him*) Oh God!

NETTIE. And I suppose everybody in town would have known it before me if your father hadn't just stumbled on it——

FRED. (*A step toward her*) Father! What does he know? He doesn't——

NETTIE. And this afternoon! Not only does that lovely news about you and Jim come just as I'm expecting them for a most important meeting because that Clara Whitney—Sick! is she! (*Throws a chair to one side and flings herself upon sofa.*) Well, look at me! I'm sick—sick and tired of being the one to sacrifice, and suffer, and then not even be told what my own husband is doing!

FRED. (*Crossing*) Now, Nettie, this thing is as safe as a bank! What's the use of getting all worked up about nothing?

[*He sits* L. *of her.*]

NETTIE. Nothing! Oh, it's nothing, is it? Nothing for me to have been humiliated this afternoon as no woman was ever humiliated before in the world! I'll never be able to face any of those women again! Do you suppose they'll let me go to Springfield after what happened in this house this afternoon?

FRED. For God's sake, what did happen?

NETTIE. What happened? I'll tell you what happened! Your father disgraced me in front of all those women; he offended one of the biggest women in club work today! Well, I've stood a good deal in the six months he's been here—yes, and from you, too—but I've reached the end— (*Rises and goes* R.C.) —do you understand me? I've reached the end!

[*Goes to desk and fusses among papers.*]

FRED. (*Rises and crosses to her*) Nettie, you're making an awful fuss about nothing! You're——

NETTIE. (*Turning on him*) Nothing? Oh, I

suppose everything is nothing to you! It was nothing to you when I had to sit on that hotel porch with him and those terrible old women for weeks last summer, while you went off on your fishing trips! And it was nothing to you that I had to entertain that miserable Phil What's-His-Name in this house till I thought I'd go crazy——

[*Fussing around desk again.*]

FRED. Now let me tell you something! Phil Lemming is one of the whitest men in Chicago, and he's gone through for me a dozen times!

NETTIE. He's a good-for-nothing drunken loafer, that's what he is, and so's his wife!

FRED. Oh! And how about your friend Bessie Cowan, or whatever her name was, that was running in here all summer? I suppose she was a sweet young thing, wasn't she?

NETTIE. (*Has taken a paper from desk*) She didn't do anything to you! If I'd ever made you put up with one-tenth of the things that you've made me endure, I tell you I'd have heard about it long ago!

FRED. Oh, I hear about it!

NETTIE. Well, all I can say is that your father and the way he's behaved here this afternoon is the last straw! And I want to know what you're going to do about it!

FRED. Oh, Nettie, don't talk silly! Just because——

NETTIE. (*Tearing paper into bits*) I mean it! What is there in it for me anyhow? I was doing very well before I ever married you! I was earning my own good living, and I can do it again! Where am I now! There isn't a girl in the crowd but what has twice as many clothes as I have! I've gone out in that green chiffon until I'd think even

you'd feel ashamed! (*Throws bits of paper into waste paper basket.*) And now what thanks do I get? You take every cent we've got and throw it away——

FRED. I haven't thrown it away! You're going to——

NETTIE. And now, on top of it all, I have to put up with this! (*Waves a hand that is meant to indicate* MINICK, *goes down and starts returning articles from bookcase to smoking table.*) I can't even have my own home to myself any more! You know what pride I took in fixing it up—nobody enjoyed having friends in more than I did! And I was the one that made them want to come—you never made any effort. But they've been coming less and less, haven't they? Even you must have noticed that. And pretty soon they won't be coming at all. (*Has taken gavel from smoking table and putting it on bookcase, when the full import of her last words sinks in, she turns and goes to him and speaks very deliberately.*) Well, before that happens I want to tell you something. I'm through. Either he goes out of this house or I do, and you can take your choice.

[*Starts to cross* L.]

FRED. (*Stopping her at* C.) Oh, now, you know you don't mean that. You've got yourself all worked up.

NETTIE. Oh, don't I, though? Well, this is all I've got to say, and I mean every word of it. Either your father goes out of this house or I do, Fred Minick— (*Starts to cross* L.) —and I don't care which it is!

[*Exits into passage, goes to her room and slams door shut.* FRED *walks upstage in desperation.*

[MINICK *enters from passage. His entrance is a pretty portentous one. That of the father who is going to remonstrate with his little boy.*]

MINICK. Now, Fred! I want you to listen to me.

FRED. (*A gesture of a man who has all he can stand and will hear no more; comes down to his* R.) Father!

MINICK. (*Comes* C.) I don't know what Nettie's had to say to you, but I want you to tell me about this nonsense of yours.

FRED. (*Crossing* R.) Father, for God's sake! Will you——

MINICK. All right! But I'm going to take hold of things just the same. I remember when you were nine years old——

FRED. (*Returning to him*) But I'm not nine years old any longer. You don't seem to realize that!

MINICK. I realize you got no right to jump into a thing like this without coming to me about it——

FRED. Father, for God's sake! You're an old man. What do you know about modern business? (*Crosses* R., *taking his hat from desk as he goes.*) If you'd only stay out of my affairs——

[*Exits and slams the outer door.*]

MINICK. (*Stands for a moment, dazed*) An old man—that's what he said—an old man.

[LULA *enters with tray and pitcher of orangeade; looks at empty room, amazed.*]

LULA. The juice of twelve oranges!

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

SCENE: *The Same Scene.*
Eight o'clock the following morning.

[FRED *enters from passage. He is in a bathrobe, his hair tousled. He glances about as though searching for something. Not finding it he goes out into the hall. The outside door is heard to open and close. He reënters the living-room, plainly annoyed now. Calls:*]

FRED. Lula! Lula! (*Crosses to passage door.*) Lula! Lula, where's the morning paper? (LULA *enters from the passage.* FRED *starts to speak a second before* LULA *is seen.*) Did you bring it in?

LULA. What?

FRED. Did you bring in the morning paper?

LULA. Yes, sir. I brought it in when I came. I put it right on your chair like always.

FRED. Well, then, I suppose——

[*Crossing to just above table* D.L. NETTIE *enters from passage.*]

NETTIE. Good morning, Lula.

[*Crossing* L.C.]

LULA. 'Morning. Guess it's in Mr. Minick room again. I'll go see— You folks pret' near ready for breakfast?

NETTIE. What's in Mr. Minick's room?

FRED. (*Is above table lower end*) The morning paper.

LULA. You folks pret' near ready for breakfast? How you want your eggs?

NETTIE. Nothing for me but a cup of black coffee.

LULA. (*Who has turned to go. Over her shoulder*) No toast?

NETTIE. I don't want anything but a cup of black coffee. (LULA *exits.*) I didn't close an eye all night!

[*Crosses to desk.*]

FRED. (*Down lower end below table*) I thought you slept pretty well. Asleep every time I looked at you.

NETTIE. I heard the clock strike one—I heard it strike two—three—four—five. I dropped off for a minute around six, and then I heard Lula come in.

[LULA *enters with newspaper, which is very much rumpled and awry.* FRED *gives an exclamation of vexation at its disarray.* NETTIE, *seeing this, gives a glance of mild triumph and says, "Well, it's your father!"* LULA *goes.* FRED *goes back of table to straighten the paper.* NETTIE *sighs gustily.*]

NETTIE. He's holding us all up; Lula's waiting breakfast; you're not even dressed.

FRED. Oh, well—all right.

NETTIE. (*Crosses* L. *below table*) He's been in that bathroom exactly twenty minutes by the clock. I'm going to call him.

[*Goes off into passage.* LULA *goes into dining-room and starts to arrange dishes on table.*]

FRED. (*With a gesture intended to restrain her*) Now!——

[*Stands listening a bit apprehensively, paper in hand.*]

NETTIE. (*Knocking at bathroom door, off. Calls:*) Father!

MINICK. (*Muffled*) Yep.

NETTIE. Are you all right? (*Another muffled response that is vaguely "Sure. I'm all right."*) Well, we were just wondering. You've been in there so long.

MINICK. Just putting on my undershirt.

NETTIE. Well, all right. But Fred is waiting——

MINICK. Coming right out.

NETTIE. All right.

[FRED *turns his attention to the newspaper. It is, in its present state, more than he can handle. He lays it on the table, straightens it out. One or two sections are upside down. The paper adjusted, he starts to read it casually as it is spread out before him, leaning on the table.* MINICK, *in his undershirt, appears in passage doorway, outer shirt in hand. His feet in the passage, his upper body projecting into the living-room as he grasps the door jamb.*]

MINICK. I'm out!

FRED. Oh all right.

[*Goes on reading his newspaper.* MINICK *pops back to his bedroom, slamming door.* NETTIE *comes out of her bedroom and slams door and reënters from the passage.*]

NETTIE. Fred, will you go in and finish dressing! (*Goes to desk.*) I can't have Lula getting three breakfasts every morning.

FRED. (*A last look at the paper. Perhaps a step back for another look*) Yep.

[NETTIE *gives him an impatient look. He goes off into passage, reluctantly.*]

NETTIE. (*Taking paper and pencil*) Oh—Lula. Come here, will you?

[LULA *comes in from dining-room to* U.C.]

LULA. Yeh.

NETTIE. I'm going out to market right after breakfast—— (*Sits in chair* U.R *of desk.*) Now—what do we need?

LULA. We don't need anything.

NETTIE. There's enough lamb for stew, isn't there?

LULA. Don't hardly think so.

NETTIE. There ought to be. I didn't eat a mouthful last night; and Mr. Min—we'll make it do—Any carrot in the house?

LULA. No, ma'am.

NETTIE. No c—— I'll get a small bunch. (*Writes "carrots."*) Open a can of peas. (*Makes a circular gesture that wreathes the stew in carrots and peas.*) You can bake a lemon pie. We ought to have a nice dessert with——

LULA. Lemon pie, when I got to do all that cleaning!

NETTIE. All right. We'll just cut up some fruit—— (*Half to herself.*) Now what else do we need? Potatoes—onions—see Holzman—electric light globes—Butter—no, we don't need butter.

LULA. Yas'm. We need butter.

NETTIE. Why, Lula! (*Perfunctorily.*) Well, we've got plenty of coffee.

LULA. No'm. Used up the last of it for breakfast.

NETTIE. Lula, you couldn't! I just got a pound Saturday.

LULA. Ain't none there.

NETTIE. You're drinking too much coffee, Lula. Very bad for you. Make you nervous.

LULA. (*Laughs*) I ain't nervous.

NETTIE. Now, is there anything else we need?

LULA. Now—let me see. No, ma'am. We don't need anything.

NETTIE. You're sure, Lula? Think hard. I don't want you to——

LULA. (*Putting hand to face in attitude of deep thought*) No'm. Can't think of anything.

[*Goes into dining-room.* MINICK *enters, fully dressed.* NETTIE *rises and puts her note book in desk.*]

MINICK. Breakfast ready?

NETTIE. Good morning, Father.

[*Putting her list away.*]

MINICK. (*Coming above table to* U.R.C.) Morning. Where's Fred? Getting dressed?

NETTIE. He'll be right out!

MINICK. I want to talk to Fred.

NETTIE. He'll be here in a minute. Did you sleep well?

MINICK. Fair, fair!

NETTIE. I looked in before we went to bed, but you were sound asleep.

MINICK. I heard you. And I heard the four of you going on out here until it must have been midnight—you and the Coreys.

NETTIE. Oh—we were just talking.

MINICK. I know—I know. (*To* LULA, *in the dining-room.*) Look here, m'girl! I ain't been

getting my other pillow lately. What you been doing with it?

NETTIE. Father, please. If there's anything you want, tell me and not Lula.

MINICK. Two nights now she ain't been giving me my other pillow.

NETTIE. Father, you know you only use one pillow. I told Lula to take the other one away.

MINICK. (*Firm about it*) I sleep on two pillows.

NETTIE. But you don't. Morning after morning, when we make up the bed, we find one on the floor. You sleep on one pillow.

MINICK. (*Not yielding an inch*) I sleep on two pillows. Ma always gave me two.

NETTIE. (*With a sigh*) All right, Father. You'll have two tonight.

[LULA *appears in dining-room door, apparently just from the kitchen, with percolator.*]

LULA. Everybody ready.

[*It is an announcement rather than a query; she disappears immediately.*]

NETTIE. (*Crosses below table to* D.R. *door. Calling*) Fred! Are you ready?

FRED. All right! In a minute!

[*His voice comes from far off.*]

NETTIE. Well, hurry up!

FRED. (*Still far off*) Go ahead—I'll be right in!

NETTIE. Come, Father.

[*Goes above table to dining-room.*]

MINICK. (*Still on his pillows*) Always *have* used two pillows. (MINICK *goes into dining-room.*) What you got for breakfast? Something good?

NETTIE. About the same as usual, Father. (LULA *hands her glass of orange juice.*) Thanks, Lula.

MINICK. (LULA *hands glass to* MINICK) Orange juice, eh? Left over from the party, huh? Where's Fred—coming?

NETTIE. He'll be here in a minute, Father.

MINICK. Don't know where that snow is they were predicting. Don't look much like snow to me today. Just guess at it, that's all they do. Guess at it. Hello, Fred.

FRED. (*Coming into the dining-room from the passage*) Good morning, Father.

NETTIE. Drink your orange juice, Fred—we're waiting for you.

FRED. I don't want any.

MINICK. Don't want any orange juice? Whole pitcher of it in the kitchen.

NETTIE. You can take Mr. Minick's glass, Lula. He doesn't want any.

[FRED *has entered from the dining-room, gathered up the newspapers, goes back into dining-room.* LULA *exits into kitchen.*]

MINICK. Not much news in the paper—— (*A pause.*) Well, looks as if my cold just about left over night. Yes, sir. Did me good, going out yesterday.

FRED. I wish we could have something besides eggs for breakfast.

NETTIE. We're lucky to have eggs.

MINICK. Understand over in England the English eat a good deal of fish for breakfast. Got one fish they call a bloater, and another one they call the kipper or something. Somebody was telling me about it. Forget who it was. Fellow over at the Home, I guess. Ya, that's who it was. Fellow

named of McIntyre. Scotty, they call him. (*The doorbell rings.*) Who's that, I wonder? Somebody coming?

[*Rises and comes into living-room above table.*]

FRED. It's probably just mail, Father.

[LULA *crosses from the passage to the hall.*]

MINICK. Nope. Wasn't his ring. Always rings twice.

NETTIE. It may be Lil. She's going downtown early.

[MINICK *has a napkin tucked in his collar. On the napkin is an egg spot.*]

DIETENHOFER. (*Off*) Old gentleman in?

LULA. (*In tired voice*) Yessir—he's in.

[*When he hears* DIETENHOFER'S *voice* MINICK *evinces immediate interest.*]

MINICK. (*Half to himself and half to* FRED *and* NETTIE) Gosh, it's Dietenhofer. (DIETENHOFER *and* PRICE *enter from the hall followed by* LULA.) And Price, too. Hel-lo there! (*Comes over to* R.C.) You must have got up in the middle of the night!

[LULA *gives* PRICE *a slight shove to pass him, crosses and exits into passage.*]

DIETENHOFER. Good morning!
PRICE. Morning! } (*Together*)

MINICK. Well! Just in time for a bite of breakfast.

DIETENHOFER. No. We come to tell you something.

NETTIE. (*Enters from dining-room, is back of table. Rather stiffly*) Good morning.

DIETENHOFER. 'Morning, ma'am. We don't aim to intrude. We just dropped in a minute to see— (*Hesitates.*) —Minick about something.

NETTIE. (*A bit coldly*) That's all right. Won't you take off your things? Father?

[*Indicating that he might assist them.*]

DIETENHOFER. No, thank you, ma'am.

PRICE. We just dropped in.

NETTIE. Well, I'm sure you'll—just—— (*Starts to go.*) Make yourselves at home.

[*Exits into passage.*]

MINICK. Sit down! Sit down! (*Calls into dining-room.*) Fred!

FRED. What?

MINICK. I want you to meet couple of friends of mine——

DIETENHOFER. (*Whispers*) No! No!

MINICK. Gentlemen, you've never met my son.

DIETENHOFER. No. No. But we want to talk to you. It's im——

[DIETENHOFER *and* PRICE *are noticeably uneasy.*]

MINICK. Here he is! (FRED *enters from dining-room, crossing above table to* D.L. *and then to* L.C.) Fred, I want to make you acquainted with Mr. Dietenhofer and Mr. Price.

[*Takes off his napkin, flinging it in chair* U.R. *of desk.* LULA *goes from kitchen into dining-room.*]

FRED. How are you, gentlemen?

DIETENHOFER. Howdy-do.

PRICE. How are you!

FRED. Sit down, gentlemen! My father's often spoken of you. (LULA *enters from dining-room, snatches napkin off chair, glaring at* MINICK *and exits into dining-room and on into kitchen, with percolator.*) Sit down.

DIETENHOFER. Well——

[*Sits on telephone stool.* PRICE *sits in armchair* D.R.. *Both eye* FRED *narrowly.*]

FRED. Well! You're a couple of early birds, aren't you?

[*Sits on sofa.*]

DIETENHOFER. Why, we just dropped in to talk over a little matter——

PRICE. With Minick.

FRED. (*A little laugh*) Well, I guess I'm not qualified to sit in on your debates. I understand you boys have some pretty lively sessions over in the park. I'd certainly like to join you though, if I can get a day off from the office.

DIETENHOFER. Sure! Sure!

FRED. Yes, indeed!

DIETENHOFER. I understand you've just gone into a new business, Mr. Minick.

FRED. (*His smile vanishing*) What's that?

DIETENHOFER. Minick here was telling us you've gone into the mail order business.

FRED. (*None too pleased*) Oh, was he!

MINICK. (*Taking an embarrassed turn up to window*) Well—we were just talking—and I happened to bring up the——

PRICE. (*Judicial*) How's it look?

FRED. (*Somewhat stiffly*) All right, thank you.

DIETENHOFER. Minick here seemed pretty worried about it yesterday——

[MINICK *is shifting a little uncomfortably and guiltily.*]

FRED. Indeed!

DIETENHOFER. He was asking us what we thought about it. Of course Price and me—we didn't know much about it, but—huh—we got taking it up with a few of the boys over at the Home last night—just a little crowd—ten, twelve—and they seemed to think you picked a pretty shaky time for it.

FRED. Oh—really?

PRICE. Tell him what Davison said.

FRED. (*Rises*) Thank you. Some other time. (*Moves toward the passage.*) I have to go now. (*A quick glance to* MINICK.) God!

[*Exits.* MINICK *comes* R.C.]

DIETENHOFER. He went off pretty sudden. (*Rises with* PRICE *and comes* R. *of* MINICK.) But I'm glad he went. Ain't we, Price? (*In a confidential tone.*) We come to tell you something you'll be mighty interested to learn.

MINICK. What's that?

DIETENHOFER. Remember what I told you yesterday about Patterson? Los Angeles? Well, he's going.

PRICE. Los Angeles.

MINICK. Well?

DIETENHOFER. Got a dispatch this morning and going right out this afternoon. There's your chance. Can't tell how long it'll be vacant. They grab 'em up mighty quick. You could get in if you went after it. Trimble likes you first rate, and so does she.

PRICE. We come right over.

DIETENHOFER. Course I know you said yesterday you wouldn't ever. But Price and me we noticed your son's wife was pretty hitey-titey with you. We was sort of remarking about it on the way home.

MINICK. (*Slowly, thoughtfully*) Oh, Nettie, she don't mean any harm. Kind of flares up and then——

DIETENHOFER. Well, harm or no harm, the minute I heard Patterson— (FRED *comes down passage and stands outside door listening.*) —was actually going I says to Price, I says: (*Turns to* PRICE *and then back to* MINICK.) Price, here's the chance for Minick to come into the Home where he can pay his three hundred a year and free as a bird.

[*Sees* FRED *and takes a step back.*]

PRICE. That's what you——

[*Stops short on seeing* FRED.]

FRED. (*Enters*) What's that?

[*Takes a step in, his eyes on the old men, a dazed look on his face as though he has heard something his ears could not credit. He is carrying his overcoat, limply, so that it drags slightly on the floor. He is unaware that he has it in his hand. As he speaks he lets the coat slide onto chair* D.L. *without knowing it is gone. Bewilderment, unbelief, pain are in his voice.*]

FRED. Do you mean to tell me that you're trying to persuade my father to go into the— (*A vague gesture toward it.*) —that Home?

MINICK. No harm meant. They just thought that if I *was* thinking of going over there, why——

[PRICE *and* DIETENHOFER, *thoroughly frightened, back to door* R.]

FRED. But you're not, Dad. Tell them you're not!

MINICK. N-n-n-n—I wasn't exactly thinking of it.

FRED. I should hope not! Why, I never heard of such a thing. Home!

MINICK. Well, a body might do worse, at that.

FRED. Dad, you don't mean to tell me you actually—*are* thinking about it!

DIETENHOFER. Guess we'll be getting on our way.

[*Exit with* PRICE.]

FRED. (*His eyes searching the old man's face*) Father! (*The outer door slams, actual terror in his voice.*) Nettie!

MINICK. (*Raises a pacifying hand, though his tone is not completely reassuring*) Now—now! Don't you get *her* all excited.

[NETTIE *reënters from passage.*]

FRED. Nettie! Did you ever suspect that Dad was thinking of leaving here——?

NETTIE. Leaving!

FRED. That he was thinking of going to a Home?

NETTIE. Why—no!

FRED. Well—he is.

MINICK. Now I don't want you to get stirred up about this—you and Nettie. I thought it all out last night, and I've got it straight in my mind.

NETTIE. Why, Father, what is it?

MINICK. (*To* FRED) Well, you see when you flared up at me yesterday——

FRED. Now, Dad——

[*Crossing to him.*]

MINICK. That's all right. I was kind of taken aback at first, didn't know just what to make of it, and then—I got to thinking. And I remember how Nettie's club ladies—they busted up minute I started to talk to them.

NETTIE. That's over now, let's not talk about it.

[*Crossing to* R. *of him.*]

MINICK. And then, putting two and two together—all of a sudden it come to me. I says to myself—Fred and Nettie—they're right. They don't want to be told things by an old fellow like me.

FRED. Why, Dad, you're not old.

MINICK. I'm turned seventy-two. Yessir! I'm a pretty old codger. It's funny how you don't realize that till somebody tells you right out.

FRED. Oh!

MINICK. You fool yourself. Everybody gets old, but not you. You see, I belong to one—time, and you belong to another. You go to work and try to mix up the two and you run right smack into trouble. Look at yesterday. I was telling that girl —you know—one that made the speech—that what she was saying wouldn't work.

NETTIE. But, Father, Miss Crackenwald is an authority on——

MINICK. Say, you can put nineteen billiard tables in your house, and your youngsters run around the corner to play billiards just the same.

FRED. That's all right, Dad. She didn't——

MINICK. Of course not. And that ain't what I'm aiming at. I mean the whole thing. Not just you and me and Nettie. But you see, young people don't think old people have got any sense; and old people don't think young folks know anything. You take

out in the park all summer, there wasn't a better informed man among 'em than I was. Problems of the day. You take whether Germany can meet her payments——

FRED. We know, Dad. But you and I understand each other.

MINICK. Why, mornings they used to wait till I got there before they'd start in. "Here he comes now," they'd say. Yessir, we'd have it hot and heavy, and it'd take a pretty good man to down me. And that's why—with winter coming and—no park —you see, a fellow has got to have people around that understands him.

NETTIE. But you can have your friends in here. It just happened that yesterday I had that meeting.

FRED. Yes.

MINICK. Over there, they all got about the same way of doing things. That's why I want to go. Get up early in the morning; you don't have to worry for fear you're going to wake somebody else up. If you want company, all you have to do is open your door. If you don't want company, shut it. You see,— (*Sits in desk chair.*) —when a fellow gets my age he's kind of set in his ways. I guess maybe Ma used to spoil me.

FRED. We're going to take care of you now.

MINICK. Sit and listen to me by the hour. "That's so, Ben. You're right, Ben." Used to make me think I was smarter than all get-out. Guess maybe she was the smart one.

FRED. But, Dad—you are smart.

NETTIE. I should say so.

[*Sits on telephone stool.*]

FRED. Why, for your age you're——

MINICK. You see.

FRED. Dad, you make me feel just terrible. Do you think we'd let you go away from here? Never!

NETTIE. It'll work out. You'll see.

FRED. Now come, Dad.

MINICK. But here's the funny part of it. Once, after she took sick she said, "Ben, Fred and Nettie are going to want you to come with them. Don't you do it." You see, Ma didn't ever know how bad things got to be with the money. But she knew a lot of things I'm just finding out. She was pretty smart.

FRED. But, Dad, you're all wrong. Now we're going to keep you right here and look after you.

NETTIE. It's going to be your home as much as ours, and you can do just whatever you like.

MINICK. No, I don't want you to change for me. It ain't natural. No call for you children to live an old man's life, but you see with me——

FRED. But, Dad, we'll do anything to make you happy.

NETTIE. Of course.

MINICK. (*Rising and crossing to* C.) H'm, well I know. But I don't want to feel that anybody's waiting around for me—— You see, us Minicks we're long livers. I'm good for another ten, fifteen years.

FRED. (*Crossing to and going* L. *of him*) Of course you are, Dad, and you're going to spend them here with us, every one of them.

NETTIE. (*Rising and going to* R. *of* MINICK) Indeed you are!

FRED. Now, Dad, we want you here. I'm all broken up about this. We want you with us. Nettie——

NETTIE. Of course, Father. We wouldn't hear of it any other way. You know that.

MINICK. Well, of course, if you feel that way I don't want to make you children unhappy, but——

FRED. Then it's settled. Now, I don't want to

hear of any more such foolishness out of you again, young man.

NETTIE. Now it's settled, Father, and over.

FRED. Yes, and from now on, things are going to be different. We'll start tonight. I'll come home early from the office, and——

MINICK. M-m-m-m.

FRED. And we'll have a nice little dinner, just the three of us.

NETTIE. Everything you like. Chicken with dumplings—and spinach——

FRED. And after dinner, we'll spend the evening just with you. I'll tell you what! You can teach us pinochle. Will you do that, Dad?

MINICK. We'll see. We'll see.

NETTIE. And I'll tell you what else we're going to do— (*The doorbell rings.*) —That'll be Lil. At ten o'clock we'll mix up some of those little fizzes that you like, and——

[NETTIE *goes to hall and exits.*]

FRED. Now, then, it's a date. And you're not going to disappoint us? Why, you had me scared out of seven years' growth, the idea of your thinking such a——

[LIL *and* NET *are heard in hall exchanging greetings.* MINICK *goes up to window, followed partly by* FRED, *as* LIL *enters, followed by* NETTIE.]

LIL. Oh—hello, Fred. Thought you'd be gone.

FRED. I'm just leaving.

[*Crossing to lower edge of sofa for coat.*]

LIL. Good morning, Mr. Minick.

[*Crosses to upper edge of sofa.*]

MINICK. Good morning.
FRED. (*Preparatory to leaving*) Well.

[*Slaps his pockets to see if he has everything.*]

NETTIE. Father Minick, don't you want to go out for a while and take a walk?
FRED. Yes, Dad. Bright day like this. Clear your cold right up.
MINICK. Well—maybe I might.
NETTIE. Yes, that'll be—— (LULA *enters from passage to answer the door.*) It's all right, Lula. I went. (*As* LULA *turns to go.*) Oh, Lula. Father Minick's going out for a walk. So you give his room a real cleaning. Do his first. And, oh, Lula! Did you clear away the breakfast things?
LULA. Yes'm.
NETTIE. I'd hardly touched my coffee. I wonder if you'd mind getting me a fresh cup?
LULA. (*Sighs*) No'm.

[*Exits.*]

NETTIE. Just put it on the table.
FRED. Want to take me as far as the L, Dad?
MINICK. I'll be awhile. You go ahead.
LIL. (*To* MINICK) It isn't as warm as it looks. (*Raising her voice.*) You'd better bundle up.
MINICK. (*Mimicking her raised voice*) I'll bundle.

[LIL *is* U.R. *of sofa.*]

FRED. Good-bye, Dad!

[*Reaches over and gives his father, as he passes, two reassuring slaps on the shoulders.*]

MINICK. Good-bye.

[*Goes into passage.*]

FRED. Don't forget tonight. (NETTIE *sits at desk and looks over her bills.*) Going down on the L, Lil? Want to come with me?

LIL. Why—not just yet, Fred. Thought I'd talk to Net a while.

[*Sits upper edge of sofa.*]

FRED. You're up and out pretty early, all right —Well——

LIL. I've been up for hours. I didn't close an eye all night. I heard the clock strike one—two—three. I dropped off for a minute around six.

[*Rises and crosses up to window. A look of recognition on* FRED'S *face.*]

FRED. That's too bad—— (*Crosses to* NETTIE.) Well, Nettie?

[*His look and tone savor of conciliation.*]

NETTIE. (*Without much life in her tone*) Goodbye, Fred.

FRED. (*Is just back of her chair*) You were a peach, old girl. (*Is rather awkward and sheepish about this, yet he wants to say it before he goes.*) And I want you to know I appreciate it.

NETTIE. What else was there to do, Fred?

FRED. Just the same you were mighty fine about it and—don't you forget it. As far as the business is concerned—— It's going to be all right—— You'll see. You're going to have lots of money some day.

NETTIE. I hope so, Fred.

FRED. (*Crossing* R. *to lower edge of desk*) Not sore at your old man, are you?

NETTIE. No.

FRED. I didn't mean to keep it from you. But every time I tried to tell you, I lost my nerve. So I thought I'd wait until it really got going. I'm sorry.

NETTIE. (*Rises*) I'm sorry too—about everything I said. I said terrible things, I know.

FRED. (*They embrace*) It's all right. I understand. (*They kiss.*) Peach! (*Goes into the hall.*) Good-bye, Lil.

LIL. (*Comes* D.R.) Well! You——

NETTIE. (*Sighs*) Lil, what could I do? Father Minick just threatened to pack up and go to an Old Man's Home.

LIL. Net!

NETTIE. Just now!

LIL. (*Sits sofa* D.L.) And coming on top of that terrible session last night! I can imagine.

NETTIE. (*Sits in desk chair*) Lil, after you and Jim left last night I had a kind of nervous chill. I was just like this.

[*Clenching her hands and gesturing nervously.*]

LIL. Well, if I had a nervous chill every time Jim and I—well, you'll learn. Why don't you come downtown with me? Do you good.

[LULA *goes into dining-room from kitchen with percolator.*]

NETTIE. Lula's cleaning and I've got my ordering to do. I don't know—maybe I will.

LULA. (*From dining-room*) Your coffee's ready.

NETTIE. All right, Lula. (*Rises and goes into dining-room.*) Lil, maybe you might like this cup of hot coffee. I can get another.

[*Brings it back into room.*]

LIL. I couldn't swallow a mouthful. Black coffee was all I had for breakfast and I had to force myself to drink that.

NETTIE. (*Sits on sofa* R. *of* LIL) Well, I thought maybe it'd buck me up a little. (*A sigh.*) Of course, Lil, I don't have to tell you what this means,— (MINICK *starts down hallway dressed to go out, with overcoat and arctics on.*) —this having Father Minick in the house. He'll be here for God knows how long. (MINICK *goes into dining-room from hall, and* LULA *passes him in the doorway as she goes into kitchen.* MINICK *goes up to buffet and gets an apple.*) Of course I don't mean I'd have it otherwise, but there's no use fooling yourself. Here we are stuck in this five-room flat and no prospects for anything better for years to come. Everything tied up in that new business, and Father Minick—— (MINICK *is now at upper edge of table back of the girls, and stops on hearing his name.*) As long as Father Minick's with us, it means no children for Fred and me—that's what it means.

LIL. (*Sympathetically*) Well, Net, you're taking a pretty gloomy view of it, I think. (MINICK *is returning through the dining-room to his room.*) After all, I suppose other people have the same problems and worked them out some way or other.

NETTIE. Maybe. But it doesn't look so simple to me.

LIL. Oh, did Daisy phone you?

NETTIE. Why no. What about?

LIL. (*Rises and goes to* R. *of desk.*) Oh, my dear! You know Lou and Eddie are sailing Tuesday?

NETTIE. Yes!

LIL. Well, Daisy and Marian are giving them a big send-off tonight.

NETTIE. Tonight!

LIL. Of course! She'll be phoning you any minute.

NETTIE. (*Shakes her head*) Oh, Lil, tonight——

[*Puts cup on desk.*]

LIL. (*Sits on phone stool*) It's going to be wonderful! You know the way Daisy is. They've chartered a whole bus, and they're going to pick everybody up——

NETTIE. Oh, Lil, we just c—— What time?

[*Rises.*]

LIL. She said six-thirty. Just before dinner. Because they're driving out to——

NETTIE. Lil, we can't possibly go.

[*Crossing* U. R. *of sofa.*]

LIL. Why not?

NETTIE. We promised Father Minick. We've got to stay at home.

LIL. (*Rises*) But tonight, of all nights!

NETTIE. (*Sits on sofa*) That's just it. We've got to stay with him. I told you about the scene we had.

LIL. (*Crossing to her*) But it sounds so silly. He's not a stranger here. And just tonight he wouldn't mind.

NETTIE. But he would, because——

LIL. Now listen. It's going to be a marvelous affair. First we're driving out to Donahue's for one of those wonderful chicken dinners. Then we're going on to the den.

NETTIE. (*Weakening*) Oh, Lil!

LIL. I tell you, it's going to be marvelous. And from the den we're going to the Early Hour Club,

and Lord knows when we'll get home. Now don't be silly!

[*Starts down passage.*]

NETTIE. I don't know what to say. I'm afraid Fred wouldn't——

LIL. Of course he would.

[MINICK *enters from passage. He is wearing hat and overcoat. At his entrance there is a confused and embarrassed stop on the part of the two women.*]

MINICK. Well!

NETTIE. I don't know what to say. I'm afraid Fred wouldn't——

LIL. Of course he would. And Father Minick wouldn't mind. I never heard of anything so foolish in all my life. Here. I'll ask him.

[*Crosses to door* L.]

NETTIE. (*Panicky*) No, Lil!

[*Rises and backs* C.]

LIL. Father Minick!

NETTIE. Lil, I wish you wouldn't.

MINICK. (*Off*) Somebody call me?

[*He comes slowly down the hall. He has taken off his coat and hat, but has forgotten his arctics.*]

LIL. Father Minick, we just want—— Nettie wants to ask you something.

MINICK. (*Entering and going to* NETTIE) Ask me something?

NETTIE. (*Rather confused*) Yes. Father Minick —uh—would you——

MINICK. Huh?

NETTIE. Well, you see, Fred and I forgot all about a party that we're invited on tonight. It's a great big farewell party for some friends of ours that are going to Europe.

MINICK. Tonight? Why sure—I'll probably be in bed long before you start out.

NETTIE. Well, you see, Father, it's rather an early party.

MINICK. Oh, you mean you're going right after dinner?

NETTIE. Well—no—the point is—we're supposed to go for dinner, if you wouldn't mind.

MINICK. *For* dinner?

LIL. Now, you wouldn't mind, would you, Father Minick? This once?

MINICK. Me? Why no—I don't mind. You run right along with your friends and have a good time.

NETTIE. It's only that it's such a special party, but it doesn't mean a thing to me. You see, these people are such good friends of Fred's——

MINICK. That's all right.

NETTIE. Well, if you're sure——

MINICK. Yes, sir. I'm sure as can be. (*Pinches her cheek gently as he looks in her face.*) The old must make way for the young.

NETTIE. What?

MINICK. It's all right.

[*Turns toward hall.*]

NETTIE. Well, it's sweet of you not to mind, Father. Aren't you going out?

MINICK. Pretty soon! Pretty soon!

[*Exits up hallway.*]

LIL. You see! I told you it would be all right.

NETTIE. (*Sitting on sofa*) Yes—I hope so.

LIL. My heavens, you can't let him tie you down like that!

[*Crosses* D.R. *after her bag.*]

NETTIE. No, I suppose not, but—— Tell me, what are you going downtown for so early?

LIL. Field's advertised georgettes for $1.95—all colors—in the basement. I thought I'd get some flesh color and make myself a little negligee. Did you see that one Marge has? Of course she paid a million dollars for it, but I can copy it for practically nothing.

NETTIE. Are they hard to make?

LIL. (*Is below desk*) There's nothing to them. Just two straight lengths, hanging right from the shoulder. Simple as a night gown.

NETTIE. I wonder if I could make one.

LIL. Of course you could. Why don't you get some, too? Look at it anyway.

NETTIE. Well, maybe I will. (LULA *enters from the passage.*) I wonder if they have—what is it, Lula?

LULA. Soap.

NETTIE. What?

LULA. I haven't got any soap for my cleaning.

NETTIE. (*Wearily crossing to desk*) All right, Lula. I'll put it on my list.

LULA. (*Starts to go and turns*) I got to have it right away. Ain't got a speck.

NETTIE. (*Impatiently*) I'm going in a minute, Lula. I'll have it sent right over.

LULA. Expect me to clean without cleanin' soap!

[*Exits into passage.*]

NETTIE. Isn't it incredible! You'd think I'd forgotten it.

LIL. They're all alike. They never tell you till the last minute. . . . Are you ready?

NETTIE. Yes, I guess so. (*Goes into hall for coat and hat, talking as she goes.*) I wonder if they have any orchid—georgette, I mean? I think orchid would be good on me, don't you?

LIL. (*In doorway, powdering her nose*) Yes, orchid would be—or if they haven't orchid, what do you think?

NETTIE. Well—blue. But not that hard blue. You know that blue I wear. . . . (*Has put on her hat, one arm now in coat sleeve.*) If I'm going downtown, I'll have to tell Lula—— (*Comes into room.*) Lula—— (LULA *appears in passage door.*) Lula, I won't be home to lunch. And Mr. Minick and I won't be home for dinner. There'll just be Father Minick. You know what there is. And Lula, I wouldn't bother to do much in this room. Go right ahead with the bedrooms. And do Father Minick's room first so you'll be out of his way by the time he gets back. I'll be back about three. And Lula—don't sing while he's taking his nap——

LIL. Net, everything'll be picked over if we don't——

NETTIE. All right, Lil. And, oh, Lula—if Mrs. Stewart telephones—here I'll write it——

[*Starts to write at desk.*]

LIL. She may say Daisy Stewart.

NETTIE. Yes, Daisy Stewart. Tell her that Mr. Minick and I are ever so much obliged and we'd love to come. Now, do you understand that?

[*Crossing to table and putting note there.*]

LULA. (*Who is back of table.*) Miss who?

NETTIE. (*Crosses back to desk.*) If Mrs. Stewart. . . . If anybody phones I'll be back at three.

LIL. Come on, Net.

NETTIE. All right, Lil. Listen, how wide is it? (*Gets her purse from desk.*) How much do you think I'll need?

LIL. Let me see—two lengths straight from the shoulder— Oh, I should think about three yards would be——

NETTIE. That isn't bad, is it? (*They are in the hall.*) Three times a dollar ninety-five—— How much is that?

[*The outer door slams.* LULA *starts singing spiritual and comes into dining-room, looking around for* NETTIE'S *coffee cup.*]

LULA. Nobody knows the trouble I've seen, Nobody but . . . (*Sees cup on desk. To herself, as she gets cup.*) There it is—— (*Starts into dining-room again, singing.*) Nobody knows the trouble I've seen, Glory Alleluia!

[MINICK *enters from passage. He has his coat on one arm. He is carrying his straw suit case on which are a few shirts. There is nothing hurried or furtive in his manner, he has come into the room seeking* LULA.]

MINICK. Lula!

LULA. Yeh?

MINICK. Where's my other shirts?

[*Comes* R.C.]

LULA. (*Back of table*) What you doin' that suit case?

MINICK. (*Puts suit case on sofa*) Never mind. Where are they?

[*Crossing* L. *to desk.*]

LULA. They in the wash. What you want with them?

MINICK. (*Puts coat and hat on desk chair*) When'll you have 'em done?

LULA. I irons Tuesday. What you up to, anyhow?

MINICK. (*Crosses to sofa and kneels and starts packing the remaining three shirts which he carried in on top of the case*) Tuesday, eh? And what's the name of that fella comes and takes your trunk away? Palmer'r something.

LULA. You mean Parmelee Transfer Company?

MINICK. That's him. Got an office right down the street.

LULA. What you want transfer company for?

MINICK. What do you think I want 'em for? I want 'em to come and take a trunk.

LULA. Mrs. Minick didn't tell me 'bout no trunk. What you going do?

MINICK. I know what I'm going to do.

LULA. If Mrs. Minick don't know about it, she goin' be awful mad when she come home.

MINICK. That'll be all right. Mad or no mad, I'm going.

LULA. What you mean—goin'? Mrs. Minick ain't goin' let you go no place.

MINICK. Let me? I'm not a child. I know what I want to do, and I'm going to do it. Think I was a plumb fool.

LULA. I don't know what you talkin' about.

MINICK. No, course you don't. But I do. It's going to be better for everybody for me to go to the Home—better for Fred and Nettie, and better for me. There's young and there's old, and they got to be let go their own ways. I got my own life, same as they have. And I ain't going to waste it teaching pinochle to anybody.

LULA. But what I goin' say to Mis' Minick?

First thing she come home she say, "Where's Father Minick?" What I goin' tell her?

MINICK. I'll tell you what to tell her. Are you listening?

LULA. Sure. I'm listenin'.

MINICK. You tell her I said "Nettie—call me Grandpa."

CURTAIN

SCENE PLOT

1. Wall chair.
2. Serving table:
   Top—3 glasses orange juice, percolator, dishes, knives, forks, napkins, toast and rack glass water.
3. Buffet:
   Top—2 candlesticks, dish fruit, knives, forks.
4. Dining-room table:
   Top—Table cloth, bowl ferns.
5. Dining-room chairs.
6. Large easy chair.
7. Floor lamp.
8. Armchair.
9. Desk:
   Top—(*a*) phone; (*b*) desk set; (*c*) lamp; (*d*) assorted papers; (*e*) school list; (*f*) card catalogue.
   Under—Chicago phone book, waste paper basket.
10. Desk chair.
11. Telephone stool.
12. Armchair.
13. Bridge lamp.
14. Bookcase:
    Top—(*a*) and (*e*) amber vase with tulips; (*b*) framed picture; (*c*) clock; (*d*) 2 small ornaments (elephants); (*e*) 3 small ornaments (tigers); (*f*) gavel.
15. Smoking table:
    Top—Green metal cigarette box, ivory paper knife, ash tray, two books.

16. Hall chair.
17. Library table:
    Top—(*a*) books; (*b*) table lamp (one socket broken so chain does not pull); (*c*) bowl white roses; (*d*) cigarette box; (*e*) magazines (*Vanity Fair* on top); (*f*) ash trays and matches.
18. Table chair.
19. Sofa with two pillows.
20. Hall table.
21. Window seat:
    Top—Bowl Chinese lilies.
    In window—Trick shade, which rolls furiously when released.
22. Steam radiators.

HAND PROPS

FIRST ACT

Off Left: Bucket for off stage noises, folding card table, clothes-horse, blankets, lunch cloth. Tray—Coddled egg, glass water, tea, sugar, cream, spinach, Waldorf salad, rice pudding, napkin, knives, etc. Hammer and screwdriver, suit case, clock, bundles, palm.

Of Right: Straw suit case, 2 cigars, watch, spectacles, card and wallet.

SECOND ACT

Off Left: Dust pan and whisk broom, carpet sweeper, pail. Tray—Pitcher orange juice, 6 glasses, plate sandwiches.

Right: Newspaper, cigar, pipe and tobacco, pipe, clasp knife, watch, loaf bread wrapped, meat wrapped, black brief case, tan Boston bag, wrist watch.

On Stage: On desk are several papers arranged to be blown off by wind; room is in general disarray; window shade is awry; all flowers are off; all lamps turned out.

THIRD ACT

Off Left: Newspaper, well crumpled; percolator of coffee.

On Stage: Dining-room table half set; Nettie's order list on desk by ink stand; cushion out of place on sofa.

LIGHT PLOT

OVERHEAD FRONT

1,000 W. spots	X-rays	1,000 W. spots
S-P-P-S-B-P	P-B-S-P-B-S	S-B-P-S-B-P
S		B
P		S
S		P

B—Blue
P—Pink
S—Straw
Footlights—Alternate P, S, B

BACK LIGHTING

1st Act: 2 Thousand watts blue (hanging)
1 " " green "
Miniature lamps on black canton drop (street light effect).

2nd Act: 3 Thousand watt white (hanging)
1 " " " (floor)

3rd Act: Same as second, *plus*
2 Thousand watt white spots shooting through windows
1 Thousand watt white bunch (hanging)
1 " " " " (floor)

COSTUME COLOR SCHEME

Lil Corey

1ST ACT: (*Enter*) Savannah brown silk crepe afternoon dress, trimmed with deep fringe of the same color—sand color slippers and silk stockings. (*Exits*) Puts on cape to match dress of same color and material, also trimmed with fringe.

2ND ACT: (*Enter*) Black velvet wrap trimmed with stone marten fur—small black felt hat—black velvet slippers and silk stockings—dark blue twill dress, tunic effect, trimmed in dark red embroidery.

3RD ACT: (*Enter*) Green cloth suit dress—green felt sport hat—sand colored slippers and silk stockings—carries velvet wrap worn in 2nd Act. Gloves and hand bag match color of slippers.

Nettie Minick

1ST ACT: (*Enter*) Gray silk tailored afternoon dress—gray stockings and black patent leather pumps. (*Exits*) Faun colored coat wrap—stone marten trimmed with felt hat of same shade trimmed with darker velvet.

2ND ACT: (*Enter*) Light green silk crepe sport dress—gray stockings and black patent leather pumps—dark blue serge coat and black felt sport hat.

3RD ACT: (*Enter*) Navy blue tailored silk crepe sport dress with white collar—dark gray stockings and same pumps as previous act. (*Exits*) Navy blue tailored cloth coat—green felt hat trimmed with green feather on side.

ANNIE

1ST ACT: (*Enter*) Light blue gingham house dress—brown and white checked apron —black shoes and stockings. (*Exits*) Old style black suit, small brim black hat trimmed with feather (comical), white waist, black shoes and stockings—old brown fur neck piece.

JIM COREY

1ST ACT: (*Enter*) Gray top coat, dark brown suit, dark brown stockings and low tan shoes, white shirt, dark blue tie, soft tan hat.

FRED MINICK

1ST ACT: (*Enter*) Tan top coat, gray soft hat, gray suit with white pencil stripes, black shoes and stockings, white shirt, black stripes; dark blue tie, with dark red stripes.

2ND ACT: (*Enter*) Same, except black bow tie and white shirt, dark brown suit.

3RD ACT: (*Enter*) Blue and white checked bath-robe. (*Later*) Black suit, white winged collar with black bow tie; gray overcoat and hat.

MINICK

1ST ACT: (*Enter*) Old gray slouch hat, gray top coat, old black suit, black bow tie and

white shirt; congress boots, white wool sox.

2ND ACT: (*Enter*) Old gray suit, pink and black woolen muffler, black house slippers, old gray flannel shirt.

3RD ACT: (*Enter*) Undershirt and gray trousers, black bow tie, white shirt, black house slippers, and later boots; old gray suit, coat and hat, same as 1st Act.

AL DIAMOND

1ST ACT: Blue suit, pearl gray vest, black bow tie, white shirt and winged collar, straw hat, fancy band, tan shoes.

MARGE DIAMOND

1ST ACT: Black georgette crepe evening dress embroidered in white beads over flesh colored satin slip, pale blue and pink sash, flesh colored stockings, black satin slippers, black satin evening cape.

2ND ACT: Gray cloth coat trimmed with gray fur collar, small gray felt hat, flesh colored stockings and gray slippers.

LULA

2ND ACT: Ball blue house dress, with large white dots, black stockings and old white canvas slippers. (*Later*) Black maid's uniform, white collars and cuffs, small white tea apron.

3RD ACT: Same house dress as 2nd Act. Blue and white checked apron.

MR. PRICE

2ND ACT: Dark gray suit, maroon sweater with letter "C" in white; large black bow tie,

black shoes and stockings, black overcoat with caracul collar, rubbers, slouch hat.

3RD ACT: Same as second.

MR. DIETENHOFER

2ND ACT: Black suit, light green tie, low collar, black slouch hat, black shoes, overshoes, black overcoat, gray muffler.

3RD ACT: Same, but no overshoes.

MRS. SMALLRIDGE

2ND ACT: Black velvet ribbed wrap, brown beaver collar; brown silk dress with small white figures, with black georgette crepe over, small brown hat with tan flower trimming.

MISS CRACKENWALD

2ND ACT: Dark navy blue tailored serge dress, with long blue cape; small black hat, severe lines, black shoes and stockings, tortoise shell glasses, white gloves.

MRS. LIPPINCOTT

2ND ACT: Black velvet cape, navy blue crepe dress, black three-cornered small hat trimmed with black and light blue tip plumes, black slippers and stockings.

MISS STACK

2ND ACT: Brown cloth dress, fur trimmed, small brown hat, flesh stockings, browr suede slippers, carries tan brief case.

POLLY WITH A PAST

Comedy in 3 acts. By George Middleton and Guy Bolton. 7 males, 5 females. 2 interiors. Modern costumes. Plays 2½ hours.

"Polly" is one of the most successful comedies of recent years, having run a whole season at the Belasco Theater, New York, as well as in London. The play has to do with the clever efforts of a girl to manufacture for herself a picturesque past in order to make herself more interesting and attractive. The little deceit gets many persons into trouble, but Polly and her friends eventually turn the trouble to good account, and Polly finds herself—after the secret is divulged—even more interesting and attractive than before, despite her desperate confession to being the daughter of a Baptist clergyman. Exceedingly good fun, with just enough sophistication. Colleges and high schools will appreciate the humor and delightful situations of "Polly with a Past." Price, 75 Cents.

THE CINDERELLA MAN

Comedy in 4 acts. By Edward Childs Carpenter, author of "Bab," "The Three Bears," etc. 8 males, 3 females. 2 interiors. Modern costumes. Plays 2½ hours.

"The Cinderella Man" tells in its charming and original way the ever-fresh story of Cinderella, only the heroine is in this case a hero—a young aspiring writer who is so proud that he will have nothing to do with the daughter of his rich neighbors, whom he supposes to be the usual sort of girl "with money." The girl, who is by no means that sort, has therefore to pretend that she is only a servant in the household. In that way she brings food, inspiration, and finally success to the young man, coming over the roof of her own house to the writer's lonely attic. By means of striking dramatic contrasts, of varied characterization, and of his eternally bright philosophy, the dramatist has contrived a charming comedy, half realistic, half romantic. This play is whole-heartedly recommended for high schools. Price, 75 Cents.

THE ROAD TO YESTERDAY

Comedy of fantasy in 4 acts. By Beulah Marie Dix and Evelyn Greenleaf Sutherland. 8 males, 6 females. 3 interiors. Costumes modern and Elizabethan. Plays 2½ hours.

"The Road to Yesterday," now published for the first time, has become a sort of modern classic. We have all heard about it, and know its romantic theme. Its memory has endured for over twenty years after its first performance. Who of us has not wished at one time or another that we might live in the romantic past—at least for a short time One girl actually did—in a dream: She lived in the days of Shakespeare, and while she experienced thrilling adventures, witnessing violence and barely escaping disaster, she was immensely relieved to wake up at the end, particularly as the hero of her dream turned out to be the hero of her waking hours. Owing to the romantic nature of the theme and the Elizabethan costumes worn during the greater part of the play, "The Road to Yesterday" is an ideal piece for girls' colleges and high schools. It is especially recommended to these. Price, 75 Cents.

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